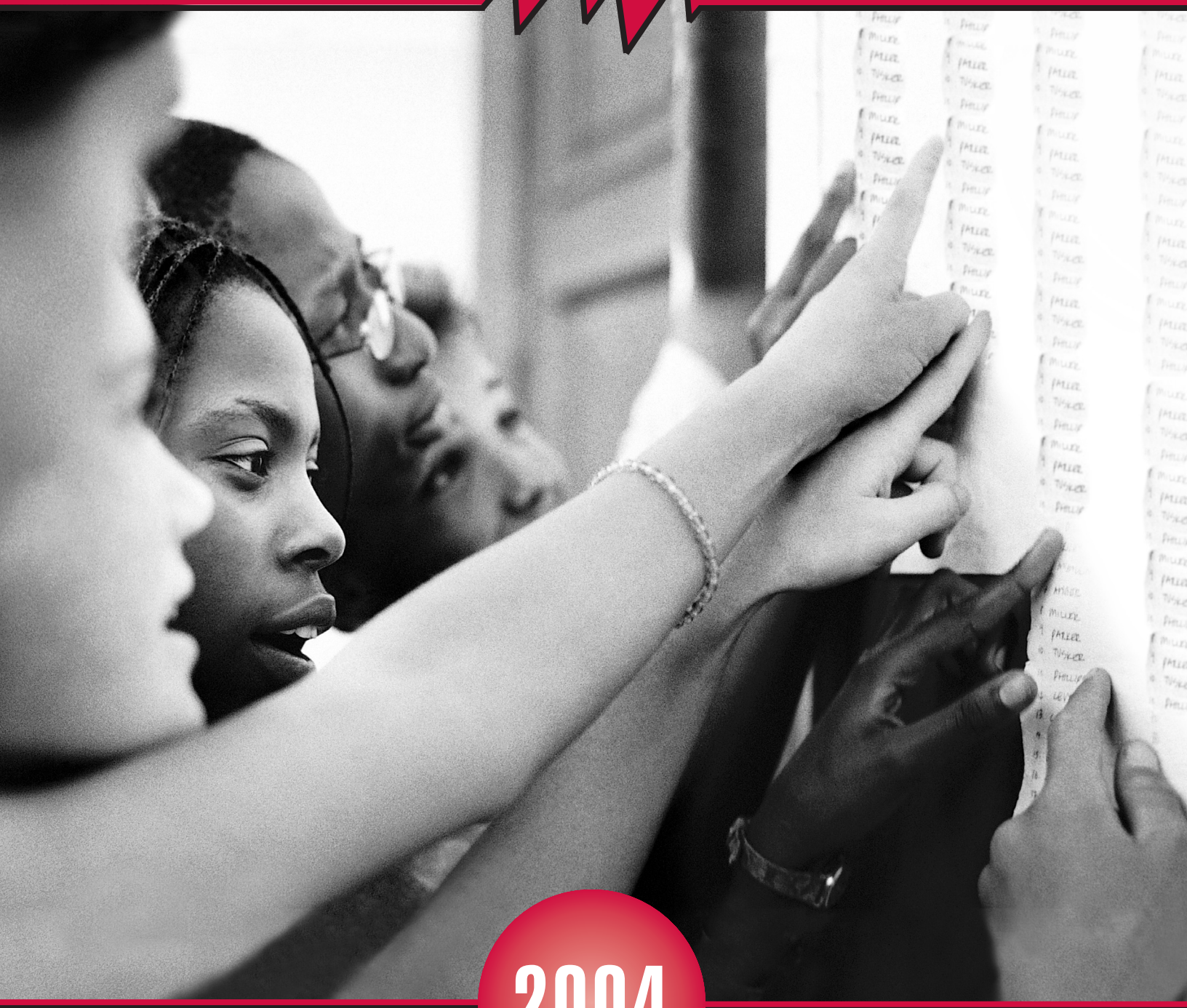
The Condition of Education in Ohio



2004

Department of Education

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Executive Summary

The Condition of Education in Ohio 2004, the first annual report on Ohio's elementary and secondary educational system, provides in-depth data about the students who are served by the system and how well they are performing. This comprehensive picture of Ohio's K-12 system provides valuable information about the effectiveness and efficiency of public education in Ohio. By openly sharing these data, the Ohio Department of Education and the State Board of Education hope to inform state and local discussions about the policies, programs and practices that influence public education. Below is a summary of the topics addressed in the full version of the report, which is available at www.ode.state.oh.us.

Section 1: Who is Being Served By Public Education in Ohio?

Section 1 examines the student population of Ohio's public and private schools. Historical trends of enrollment by year and grade give some indication of the overall stability of Ohio's population over the last several decades. This section shows trends affecting certain student populations — including students in the major racial and ethnic groups, low-income students, those with limited English proficiency, gifted students and those with disabilities.

- Ohio's public school enrollment remains steady at approximately 1.8 million students over the past five years.
- Enrollment is increasing at the preschool/kindergarten and high school grade spans, but is declining in the elementary school years.
- The majority of students are educated in school districts serving 1,500 or more students.
- There is increasing racial and ethnic diversity across the state, with a 4 percentage point increase in the number of minority students being served from 1994 to 2004.
- Ohio's public schools are serving more students with limited English proficiency, students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged students than in years past.

Section 2: How Well are Ohio's Students Achieving?

Section 2 focuses on the performance of Ohio's students on statewide and national assessments of reading and mathematics skills. Student achievement is up overall, but this section pays particular attention to the differences in performance between students with various demographic characteristics.

- Student performance is improving on both state and national measures of student achievement.
- More than 78 percent of third-graders passed the Grade Three Reading Achievement Test in its first year of implementation.
- Fourth-graders in 2003-04 showed improvement in mathematics, science and reading over 2002-03.
- Sixth-graders made strong gains in mathematics, improving the percentage at or above proficient by 12.8 points from 2002-03.
- In the 2003-04 academic year, only 37 percent of Black children passed Ohio's sixth-grade mathematics proficiency test compared to 72 percent of White children.
- Sixth-grade reading test scores also show a gap in performance – 40 percent of Black children passed the test compared to 70 percent of White children.
- On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Ohio students outperformed their counterparts nationally and in neighboring states.

SUMMARY

Section 3: Are Ohio's Students Ready for College?

Section 3 focuses on how well Ohio prepares students for higher education and careers. This section explores participation in rigorous high school academic programs, graduation rates for all students and diverse student groups, as well as college preparedness on the national ACT and SAT I tests. In addition, data on career-technical programs provide information on alternative career paths.

- Since 2000, the number of Advanced Placement tests taken in Ohio has increased by 28 percent from approximately 27,000 to more than 37,000 tests, while the average score has remained steady at just over 3 points (or passing).
- Ohio's graduation rate has increased since 1995-96 to a current level of almost 85 percent.
- Black and Hispanic students are graduating at substantially lower rates than White and Asian students.
- Ohio's students score above the national average in both the verbal and mathematics portions of the ACT and SAT I.
- College remediation rates for students who take the more rigorous curriculum (complete core) are 19 percentage points lower than those who take a minimum core curriculum.

Section 4: How is Ohio Supporting Improvement in Teaching and Learning?

Section 4 centers on the programs and support that Ohio is implementing to positively affect student performance, especially the accountability system as a tool for focusing on improved teaching and learning. This section points to academic content standards and highly qualified teachers as important paths toward helping students meet their academic goals. Discipline data provide information on whether students are educated in safe, supportive learning environments. Fiscal resources offer a glimpse at state, local and federal support of Ohio's educational system. Lastly, programs for special populations and schools in need of improvement highlight how the educational system helps all students reach higher levels of achievement.

- More districts and schools met the standard for Excellent or Effective status and fewer districts and schools were in Academic Watch or Academic Emergency than in the previous year.
- 93.1 percent of core courses in grades K-8 and 92.7 percent of core courses in grades 9-12 are taught by highly qualified teachers.
- More than 1 million students participate in the free and reduced-price lunch program, but only 200,000 participate in the school breakfast program.
- Out-of-school suspensions make up 43.7 percent of all types of discipline occurrences.
- Attendance rates for all racial and ethnic groups are above 92 percent.
- In 2000, 70 percent of 218 levies passed. In 2004, only 43 percent of 427 school levies passed.
- 35 school districts are in Fiscal Emergency, Fiscal Watch or Fiscal Caution.

Section 5: Closing Ohio's Achievement Gaps: Insights from the *State Superintendent's Schools of Promise*

This special section highlights the *State Superintendent's Schools of Promise* – schools that serve populations with high rates of poverty and that are achieving high levels of performance. Student academic performance in these schools runs counter to what some people might believe is possible in low-income and minority student populations. These schools provide important evidence, strategies and best practices at the state and local level as educators plan improvement efforts and work to meet state performance and accountability goals.

Introduction

This first annual report on the *Condition of Education in Ohio 2004* provides in-depth data about the students who are served by Ohio's elementary and secondary educational system and how well they are performing. This report provides educators, policy makers and researchers with a comprehensive picture of Ohio's kindergarten through grade 12 system. By openly sharing this data, the Ohio Department of Education and the State Board of Education hope to inform state and local discussions about the policies, programs and practices that influence teaching and learning. We hope this report will serve all who seek to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public education in Ohio.

In particular, this report focuses on the results attained by Ohio's public school students. Ohio's social and economic future depends upon the state's capacity to provide a high-quality of public education to all of its citizens. The *Condition of Education in Ohio 2004* advances the discussion of student achievement in Ohio by sharing information about the students served, indicators of their academic performances, and information about the strategies employed through statewide policies, programs and practices.

The first section, *Who Is Being Served by Public Education in Ohio?*, examines student populations in Ohio's public and private schools. This section gives longitudinal enrollment information for different types of schools and school districts and for the various grade levels. This section also provides demographic information for students of various racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups, in addition to enrollment information for students participating in selected special programs.

The second section, *How Well Are Ohio Students Achieving?*, provides a wealth of information about student achievement in Ohio. This section explains the state's student assessment program and gives information about how students, schools and school districts are performing. Additionally, Ohio's results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) are compared with surrounding states, as well as the nation as a whole. The section looks closely at the extent to which all students participate in the assessment program and describes the results achieved by different populations of students.

Are Ohio's Students Ready for College? This third section focuses on how well Ohio prepares students for higher education and careers. It explores participation in rigorous high school academic programs, graduation rates for all students and diverse student groups, as well as college preparedness on the national ACT and SAT I tests. In addition, data on career-technical programs provide information on alternative career paths.

The fourth section answers the question: *How Is Ohio Supporting Improvement in Teaching and Learning?* In particular, this section centers on the programs and support that Ohio is implementing to positively affect student performance, especially the accountability system as a tool for focusing on improved teaching and learning. This section shows how the state is progressing toward the goal of ensuring every student in Ohio has a highly qualified teacher. Additionally, the section addresses the extent to which students are accessing challenging curricula that cover the depth and breadth of the state's academic content standards. It also describes the status of efforts to improve certain learning conditions that might influence student achievement. Finally, this section explores important issues regarding the fiscal resources made available to public schools.

Finally, *Closing Ohio's Achievement Gaps* highlights schools in the state that are successfully teaching all children to achieve the state's challenging academic content standards. This special section highlights the *State Superintendent's Schools of Promise* – schools that serve populations with high rates of poverty and that are achieving high levels of performance. Student academic performance in these schools runs counter to what some people might believe is possible in low-income and minority student populations. These schools provide important evidence, strategies and best practices at the state and local level as educators plan improvement efforts and work to meet state performance and accountability goals.

This first annual report contains baseline information that will be updated each year. These data are designed to enrich discussions as policy makers, educators and concerned citizens work to improve teaching and learning for all of Ohio's students.

List of Tables and Figures

Section 1: Who is Being Served by Public Education in Ohio?

This section includes data on enrollment trends for public and private school students in Ohio, the distribution of public school students and districts by population density, the racial/ethnic distribution of students, the number of students with limited English proficiency, the number of students receiving special education services and the number of students enrolled in chartered public schools, known as community schools. Enrollment information presented in this section is collected from the Ohio Department of Education's Education Management Information System (EMIS).

Overall, Ohio public school enrollment remains steady at approximately 1.8 million students over the past five years. Enrollment is increasing at the preschool/kindergarten and high school grade spans but is declining in the elementary school years. The majority of districts serve between 1,000 and 5,000 students. There is increasing racial and ethnic diversity across the state, with a 4 percentage point increase in the number of minority students being served from 1994 to 2004. Ohio public schools are serving more students with limited English proficiency, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students than in years past.

Are Enrollments Stable?

In October 2004, more than 2 million students were enrolled in Ohio's public and private elementary and secondary schools. Of these, more than 1.8 million attended public schools and about 220,000 attended nonpublic schools. After reaching a high of 2.4 million in the late 1970s, kindergarten through 12th-grade enrollment declined rapidly for nearly a decade. But, since the mid 1980s, Ohio's student enrollment has been relatively stable, reflecting the overall pattern of school-age children.

Table 1.1 and Figure 1.2 provide a recent history of public, nonpublic and total enrollment since 1979. Data shown have been selected from five-year intervals starting with the 1978-79 school year through 1998-99 and each year since. Data for public schools include community schools.

While the total enrollment picture has been one of very little change overall, there are some recent trends worth noting. Private school enrollment over the past five years has declined by approximately 20,000 students, while public school enrollment has increased slightly. Much of the growth in the public sector has occurred in Ohio's community schools. Since their introduction in 1999-2000, community school enrollment has increased to just over 44,000. As shown in Table 1.1 and Figure 1.2, with this rapid growth in community school enrollment, these schools still only accounted for 2.2 percent of the total student population in 2004.

Table 1.1

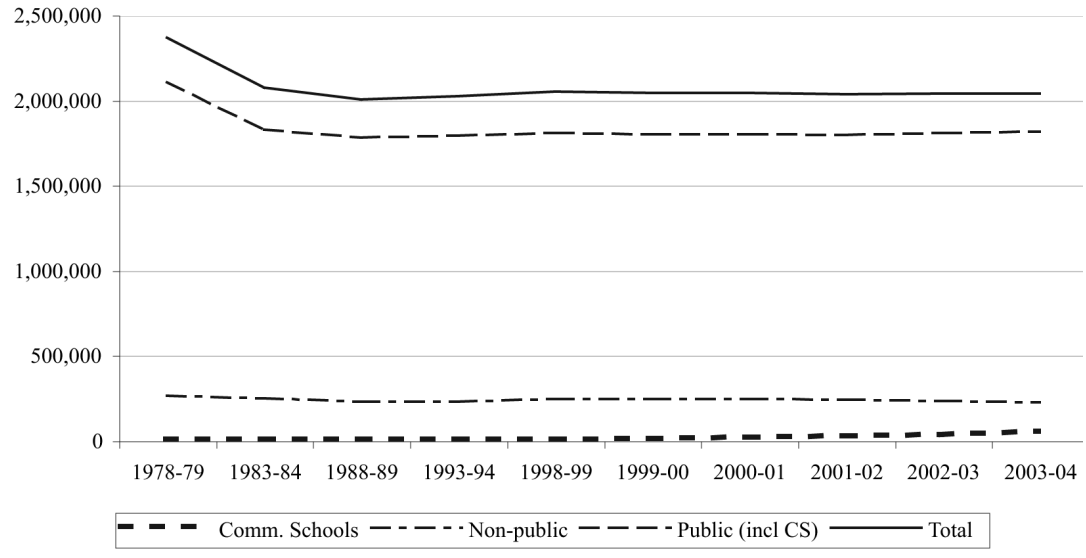
Ohio Public and Non-Public School Enrollment
Fiscal Years 1979-2004

Fiscal Year	Community	Public, including Community	Non-public	Total	Percent Change
1978-79	0	2,100,820	262,802	2,363,622	
1983-84	0	1,825,672	245,581	2,071,253	-12.4
1988-89	0	1,777,817	225,832	2,003,649	-3.3
1993-94	0	1,790,987	229,228	2,020,215	0.8
1998-99	0	1,807,125	243,120	2,050,245	1.5
1999-00	2,714	1,798,747	242,989	2,041,736	-0.4
2000-01	9,895	1,799,560	242,845	2,042,405	0.0
2001-02	20,916	1,794,113	239,080	2,033,193	-0.5
2002-03	27,199	1,806,404	232,092	2,038,496	0.3
2003-04	44,531	1,813,207	222,830	2,036,037	0.1

Notes: Data are from EMIS 2004. This number represents all students funded during the October count week. Count includes Kindergarten through grade 12.

Figure 1.2

Ohio Public K-12 Enrollment
1979-2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

At Which Grade Levels are Enrollments Increasing or Decreasing?

Tables 1.3 and 1.4 compare enrollment by grade between the 1999-2000 and 2003-04 school years. Overall, enrollment for 2003-04 was 1.4 percent larger than four years earlier. But the pattern of enrollment across grades provides insights about short- and long-term trends that will affect Ohio schools.

Table 1.3

Ohio Public School Enrollment by Grade Level 2000 and 2004

Grade	1999-00	2003-04	Percent change from 1999-00 to 2003-04
Preschool	25,601	28,457	10.0
Kindergarten	98,259	106,368	7.6
1st Grade	142,645	133,579	-6.8
2nd Grade	139,133	130,473	-6.6
3rd Grade	141,455	133,342	-6.1
4th Grade	141,159	135,236	-4.4
5th Grade	139,417	141,123	1.2
6th Grade	138,713	141,810	2.2
7th Grade	139,701	147,140	5.1
8th Grade	139,575	145,958	4.4
9th Grade	152,509	156,014	2.2
10th Grade	131,438	140,029	6.1
11th Grade	121,208	129,117	6.1
12th Grade	118,223	124,717	5.2
Total	1,769,037	1,793,363	1.4

Note: Data are the year-end average daily membership (ADM) for all public districts, including community schools, in Ohio. This calculation will differ from the figures presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.4

Ohio Public School Enrollment by Grade Bands 2000 and 2004

Grade Bands	1999-00	2003-04	Percent change from 1999-00 to 2003-04
Preschool/Kindergarten	123,860	134,825	8.1
1st through 8th Grade	1,121,799	1,108,660	-1.2
9th through 12th Grade	523,378	549,877	4.8

Note: Data are the year-end average daily membership (ADM) for all public districts, including community schools, in Ohio. This calculation will differ from the figures presented in Table 1.1.

As shown in Table 1.4, preschool and kindergarten enrollment shows the largest percentage gains during these years. At the same time, the enrollment in elementary grades in Ohio has generally declined. Thus, the increase in preschool and kindergarten is consistently lower in 2003-2004 than population shifts. The change in preschool corresponds with the increasing emphasis by policy makers and educators in Ohio to promote the efficacy of quality educational experience at early levels of development.

Overall, the pattern of enrollment in elementary grades is consistently lower in 2003-04 than the 1999-2000 school year, suggesting a longer term decline in the number of school-age children in Ohio.

While this decline in the earlier grades has taken place, the larger elementary cohorts from 1999-2000 are now reaching middle school and high school, showing up as significant increases in those grades. This trend also is impacted by the increased graduation rate, noted in Section 3, which has the effect of keeping more students in the system longer.

If the overall school-age population in Ohio does not grow in the near term, and if graduation rates continue to rise, the relative enrollment of high school students to the total will continue to increase, suggesting the need for re-examination of resources to meet the challenges of success in high school. This theme will be examined further in Section 4 of this report.

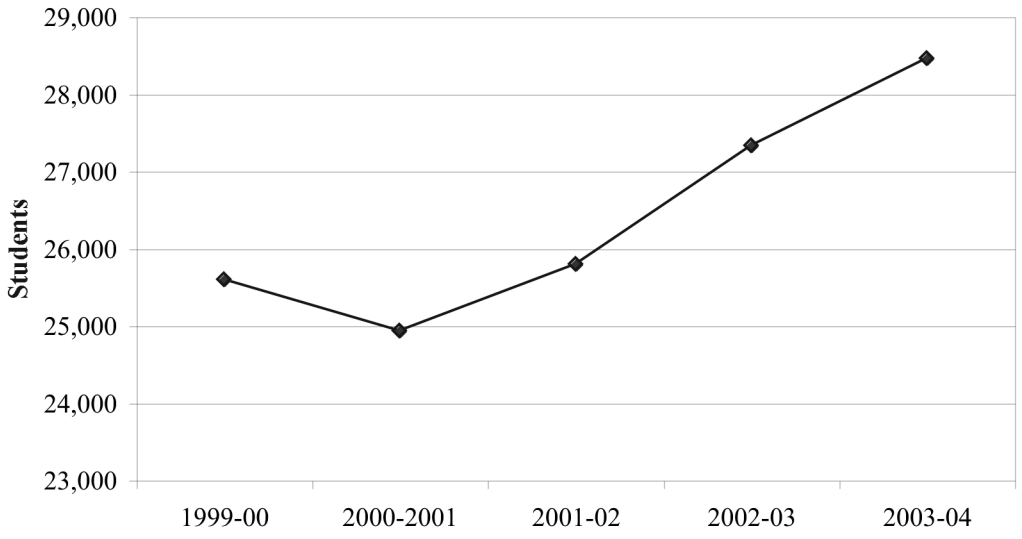
What are the Enrollment Trends in Early Childhood Education?

The importance of early childhood education is well documented. Attending preschool helps prepare children for the challenges of kindergarten. As shown in Figure 1.5, Ohio's preschool enrollment has been steadily increasing over the past five years, approaching 30,000 students in 2003-04. The percentage of districts offering all-day, every-day kindergarten also has been increasing, as shown in Figure 1.6, reaching just over half of districts.

Offering all-day, every-day kindergarten extends the opportunities to learn for Ohio's youngest students. A good foundation for learning starts in early childhood.

Figure 1.5

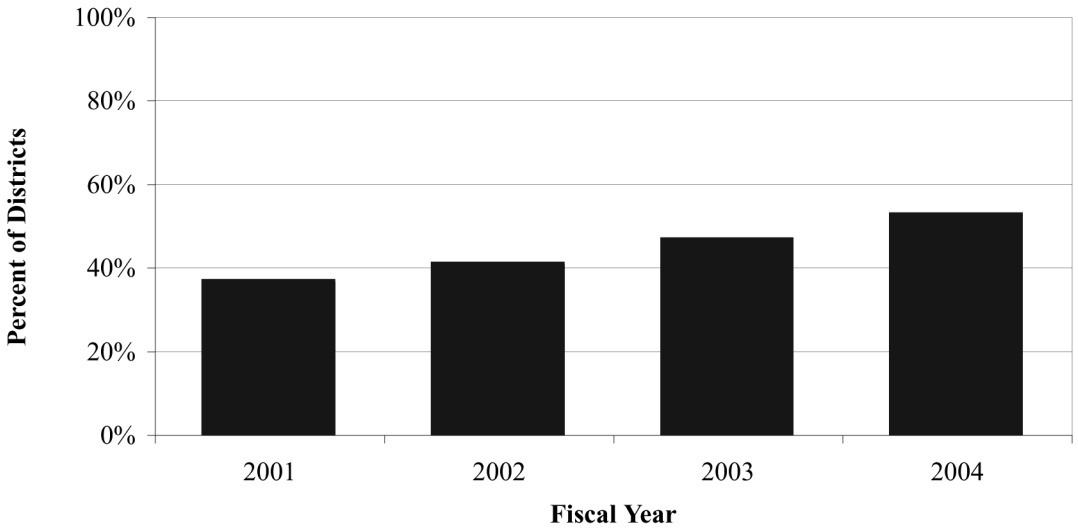
Ohio Public Preschool Enrollment 2000-2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 1.6

Percent of Districts with All-Day, Every-Day Kindergarten
Fiscal Years 2001-2004



Note: Data are from the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, ODE.

What is the District-Level Enrollment in Ohio?

Examining the size of Ohio's school districts gives another perspective on enrollment. Table 1.7 displays the distribution of district enrollments. Since the 1999-2000 school year, the distribution of students in Ohio's districts has not changed much, with the largest concentration of districts serving between 1,000 and 2,500 students. In 2003-04, about 18 percent of Ohio districts served less than 1,000 students and more than 11 percent of districts served more than 5,000 students.

Table 1.7

Ohio School District Enrollment 2004

2003-04 Total District Enrollment	Number of Districts	Percent of Total Districts
Less Than 500	9	1.5
500 to 999	102	16.8
1000 to 1499	125	20.6
1500 to 2499	164	27.0
2500 to 4999	138	22.7
Over 5000	70	11.5
Total	608	100%

Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

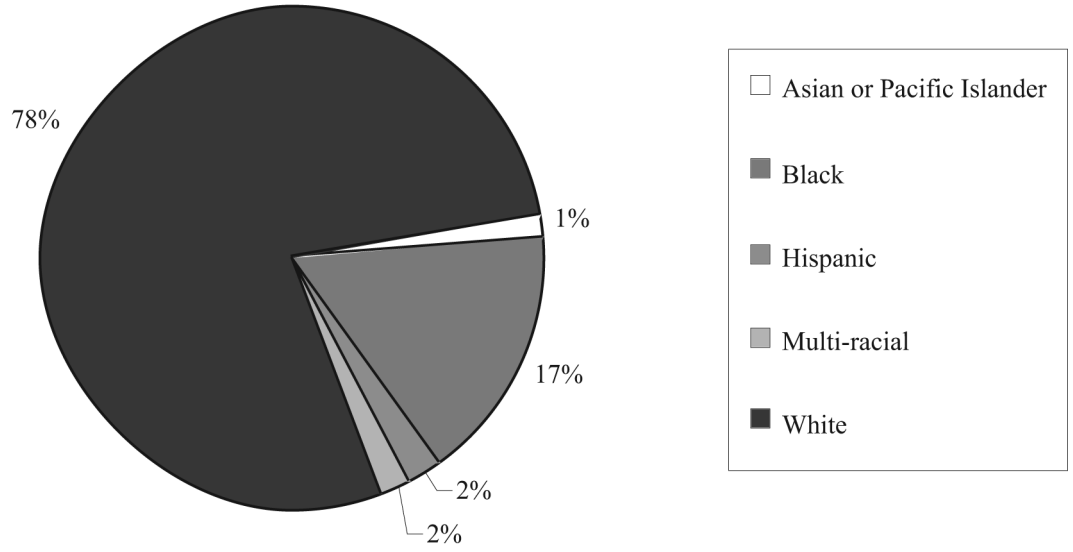
What are the Demographic Characteristics of Ohio's Students?

The racial/ethnic composition of Ohio's public school students in 2003-04 is shown in Figure 1.8. The majority of students in Ohio are White (77.9 percent). Most of Ohio's minority students are Black (16.6 percent), while approximately 5 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander, Multi-racial or Hispanic.

Ohio's student population has become more diverse in the last decade, with the percentage of minority students increasing from approximately 18 percent of the total in 1993-94 to 22 percent in 2003-04. Table 1.9 shows the change in the percentages of each racial/ethnic category over the last five years. The Multi-racial and Hispanic populations have increased the most in the last five years, with each group adding approximately 15,000 students.

Figure 1.8

Ohio Public School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity
2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Table 1.9

Change in Ohio Public School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity
1994-2004

Racial/Ethnic Group	1993-94	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Asian/Pacific Islander	Less than 1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%
Black	15.3%	13.4%	16.2%	16.5%	16.5%	16.6%
Hispanic	1.0%	1.3%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%	2.1%
Multi-racial	Less than 1%	4.8%	1.2%	1.5%	1.7%	2.0%
White	82.0%	79.4%	79.7%	78.9%	78.5%	77.9%

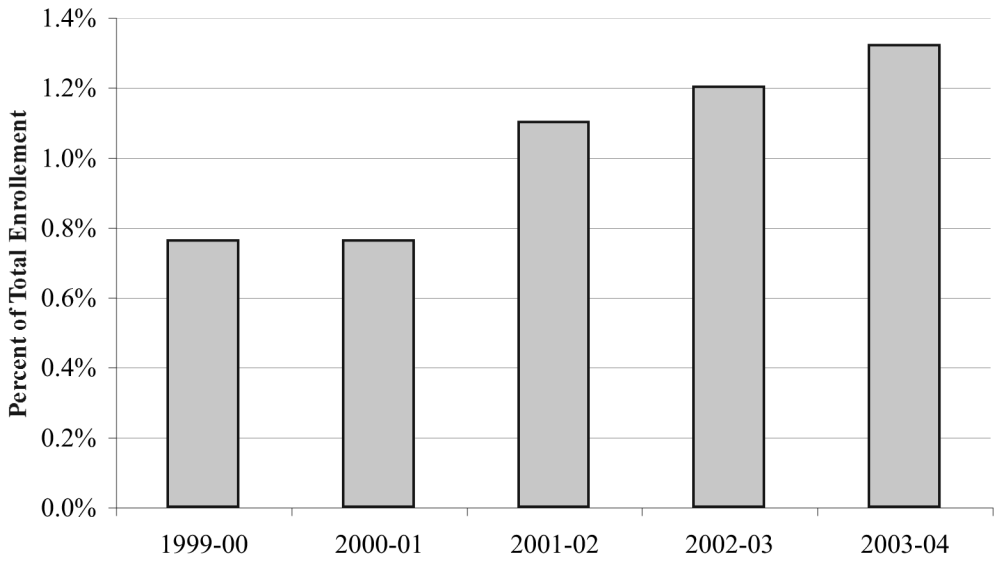
Note: Data are from EMIS based on year-end ADM. In 1999-2000, a large urban district reported the majority of their non-White students as Multi-racial. This can explain the higher percentage of Multi-raal students and lower percentage of Black students in that year compared with the other years.

What are the Enrollment Trends for Students with Limited English Proficiency, Students with Disabilities and Gifted Students?

The other segments of the public school population that have changed over time are students with limited English proficiency, students with disabilities and gifted students. The limited English proficient (LEP) population has increased by approximately 11,000 students over the last five years, although they remain a small proportion of the total population. There are more than 100 different native languages spoken by students with LEP in Ohio, with approximately 37 percent of Ohio's LEP students speaking Spanish as their primary language. Figure 1.10 shows LEP enrollment trends.

Figure 1.10

Ohio Public School Enrollment of Students with Limited English Proficiency 2000-2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

The percentage of students with disabilities has increased over the last five years, ranging from 12.16 percent of the total public student population in the 1999-2000 school year to a high of 13.34 percent in 2002-03. This was followed by a decline to 13.17 percent in 2003-04.

Table 1.11

Ohio Public School Enrollment by Disability Status, 2000-2004

	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Students without Disabilities	87.8%	87.2%	87.0%	86.7%	86.8%
Students with Disabilities	12.2%	12.8%	13.0%	13.3%	13.2%

Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

All students with disabilities have needs that must be addressed to ensure their academic success, but the severity of disabilities varies greatly. Only about one-fourth of Ohio's students with disabilities are identified as having serious cognitive impairments such as developmental handicap (20.7 percent), multiple handicaps (4.4 percent) or traumatic brain injuries (.3 percent). The largest single category of students with disabilities includes those identified with a specific learning disability (approximately 42 percent). A specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological process involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities or mental retardation. Approximately 13 percent of those in the disabled population are speech-impaired students who have communication disorders such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment or voice impairment, which adversely affect their educational performance. Table 1.12 shows students with disabilities by condition over time.

Table 1.12

Students with Disabilities Enrolled in Ohio Schools by Disability Type 2000-2004

Disability Type	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Multiple Disabilities (other than deaf-blind)	4.22%	4.23%	4.31%	4.34%	4.44%
Deaf-Blind	0.01%	0.01%	0.01%	0.02%	0.01%
Hearing Impairments	1.04%	1.04%	1.02%	0.99%	1.06%
Visual Impairments	0.43%	0.42%	0.42%	0.40%	0.46%
Speech Impairments	16.92%	15.45%	13.92%	13.23%	13.83%
Orthopedic Impairments	1.14%	1.08%	1.02%	0.93%	0.95%
Other Health Handicapped	2.74%	3.39%	Major 0.17%	0.20%	0.24%
			Minor 4.16%	5.16%	6.16%
Emotional Disturbance	6.40%	6.43%	6.62%	7.02%	7.58%
Cognitive Disabilities	23.53%	23.49%	22.89%	21.64%	20.70%
Specific Learning Disabled	38.94%	39.57%	40.06%	40.26%	42.06%
Preschool child with disability	3.74%	3.67%	3.84%	3.82%	NA
Autism	0.71%	1.01%	1.34%	1.71%	2.17%
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	0.19%	0.22%	0.24%	0.28%	0.33%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: Data are from EMIS 2004. NA - Data not available for 2003-04.

In the 2003-04 school year, Ohio identified approximately 16 percent of its student population as gifted in one or more areas. Table 1.13 shows the overall percentage and the percentages by area. As Ohio works to raise expectations and make sure that all children are challenged to reach their potential, it is essential to ensure that our educational system truly challenges all students, including those who have been identified as gifted. In 2003, the State Board of Education adopted a Policy Statement on the Future of Gifted Education in Ohio. This policy includes 10 goals to guide ODE's work in gifted education over the next decade. During 2004, several projects were launched to help Ohio move toward these goals.

Table 1.13

Ohio Students Identified as Gifted by Area
2004

Area of Gifted Identification	Percent Identified as Gifted
Any One (or more) Area	16.2%
Superior Cognitive (IQ or Total Achievement)	5.6%
Specific Academic-Math	7.1%
Specific Academic-Reading	7.1%
Specific Academic- Science	4.4%
Specific Academic-Social studies	4.1%
Creative Thinking	2.7%
Visual and Performing Arts	2.1%

Note:Date are from EMIS 2004.

Although a significant number of students are identified as gifted in Ohio, one of the goals in the policy addresses the need to examine disproportional identification across racial and ethnic groups. Table 1.14 shows the distribution of students identified as gifted across racial/ethnic groups and the proportion of students from each group identified.

Table 1.14

Percent of Ohio Gifted Students by Race/Ethnicity and Percent Identified as Gifted by Race/Ethnicity
2004

Race	Percent of Total Gifted Population	Percent Within Racial Group Identified as Gifted
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.1%	27.0%
Black	7.4%	7.1%
Hispanic	0.9%	7.2%
Native American	0.1%	11.1%
Multi-racial	1.4%	11.4%
White	88.0%	17.6%

Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

To assist districts, three research and evaluation projects examining disproportional identification will be completed by summer 2005. Each project will review national research on this topic, evaluate the status of efforts to address the issue in Ohio, provide case studies of districts effectively working on the issue, and identify other resources that districts can use to improve their own practices in each area.

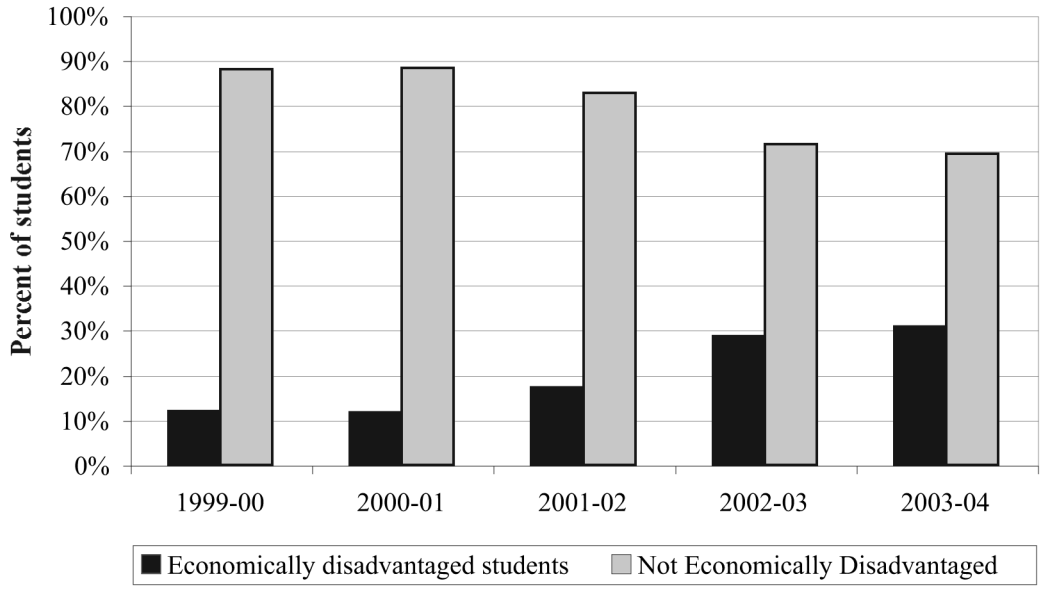
What are the Economic Conditions of Ohio's Students?

The economic conditions of Ohio's students and families can be measured in a variety of ways. The U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS) estimates the number of residents who meet its poverty criteria based on household income and other earnings. These criteria identify a family of four as low-income if its annual earnings are less than $18,400. Based on the March 2003 administration of the CPS, 13.5 percent of Ohio's families with children ages 5 to 17 are considered low income. Children are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch programs at school if they are from families earning 185 percent of the poverty level ($34,040 for a family of four) or less. According to the CPS, Ohio families with children ages 5 to 17 that meet the eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch make up 28 percent of the population. Ohio ranks 29th compared to other states in this category; Connecticut has the lowest percentage at 18.7, and Washington, D.C. has the highest at 51.3 percent.

Economic status also is reported annually through EMIS. Students are considered economically disadvantaged if they are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch or if they or their guardians are known to be recipients of public assistance (Figure 1.15). The main source for determining if a student's family is receiving public assistance is the Education Monetary Assistance Distribution (EMAD) system. Economic status also is reported to the U.S. Department of Education to determine the amount of Title I allocations. Sixty percent of Ohio's students attend schools that are eligible for Title I funds (http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/overview03/table_09.asp).

Figure 1.15

Ohio Public School Students by Economic Status 2000-2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Statewide, the percentage of students reported as economically disadvantaged has increased over the last five years from 12.7 percent to 30 percent. According to year-end EMIS data, 30 districts did not report any economically disadvantaged students. Of the remaining 582 districts, the average percentage of economically disadvantaged students enrolled was 23.9 percent, with one-fourth of the districts reporting less than 12.6 percent and one-fourth reporting more than 31.2 percent. Seven percent, or 42 Ohio districts, reported that 50 percent or more of their students are economically disadvantaged. Among the 42 districts with the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students, 40 percent are considered rural and 38 percent are urban. In each of the eight largest urban districts, at least 56 percent of students are economically disadvantaged.

Section 2: How Well Are Ohio's Students Achieving?

A sound education is increasingly important in the 21st century. As knowledge continues to explode and access to information increases, the value of strong academic preparation has never been greater.

Exacerbating this trend is a loss in the number of Ohio manufacturing jobs, which declined from approximately 1 million in 1990 to about 844,000 in 2002 (Bureau of Labor Statistics). In contrast, from 1996 to 2001, employment opportunities in intensive, high technology fields rose 12 percent in Ohio. Jobs of today require higher levels of education, knowledge and skills; graduates with these higher levels have greater earning power.

This trend highlights an imperative for education professionals – assuring our educational system produces higher achievement for all students. Consequently, ODE has identified higher achievement for all students as its overarching goal.

Overall, student performance is improving on both statewide and national measures of student achievement. For example, more than 78 percent of third-graders passed the Grade Three Reading Achievement Test in its first year of implementation. Fourth-graders in 2003-04 showed improvement in mathematics, science and reading over 2002-03. In addition, Ohio's sixth-graders made strong gains in mathematics, improving the percentage at or above proficient by 12.8 points from 2002-03. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Ohio students outperform their counterparts nationally and in neighboring states.

Despite this progress, achievement gaps continue to pose a major challenge. For example, in the 2003-04 academic year, only 37 percent of Black children passed Ohio's Sixth-Grade Proficiency Test in Mathematics compared to 72 percent of White children; 40 percent of Black sixth graders passed the reading test compared to 70 percent of White children.

How is Student Performance Measured?

There are many resources to help Ohio measure its progress toward the goal of higher achievement for all, including statewide tests, national assessments, college readiness exams, graduation rates and college enrollment trends. Performance on statewide tests is the most common measure of student achievement.

Ohio is presently in a period of transition from learner-outcome based proficiency exams to standards-based achievement tests. Third-grade students during the 2003-04 school year were the first to take a new achievement test, and additional tests will be phased in each year until achievement tests are fully implemented in 2007-08 (Table 2.1).

The new achievement tests measure student progress in attaining the knowledge and skills detailed in Ohio's academic content standards. The academic content standards were developed with input from stakeholders throughout the state with the goal of preparing students to succeed in the post-high school environment. Since the new achievement tests measure performance based specifically on those standards, test results provide valuable insight into whether Ohio is improving access to a high-quality education.

Table 2.1

Statewide Assessment Implementation Schedule

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Kindergarten		Training in use of Readiness	Readiness Assessment	Readiness Assessment	Readiness Assessment
Grades 1 - 2	Diagnostics R,W,M	Diagnostics R,W,M	Diagnostics R,W,M	Diagnostics R,W,M	Diagnostics R,W,M
Grade 3	Achievement R	Achievement R,M	Achievement R,M	Achievement R,M	Achievement R,M
	Diagnostics W	Diagnostics W	Diagnostics W	Diagnostics W	Diagnostics W,S,SS
Grade 4		Achievement R,W	Achievement R,M,W	Achievement R,M,W	Achievement R,M,W
	Proficiency R,W,M,S,C	Proficiency M,C,S			Diagnostics S,SS
Grade 5		Achievement R	Achievement R,M	Achievement R,M,S,SS	Achievement R,M,S,SS
					Diagnostics W
Grade 6			Achievement R,M	Achievement R,M	Achievement R,M
	Proficiency W,R,M,C,S	Proficiency W,R,M,C,S			Diagnostics W,S,SS
Grade 7		Achievement M	Achievement R,M	Achievement R,M,W	Achievement R,M,W
					Diagnostics S,SS
Grade 8		Achievement R,M	Achievement R,M	Achievement R,M,S,SS	Achievement R,M,S,SS
					Diagnostics W
Grade 10	OGT R,M	OGT R,M,W,S,SS	OGT R,M,W,S,SS	OGT R,M,W,S,SS	OGT R,M,W,S,SS

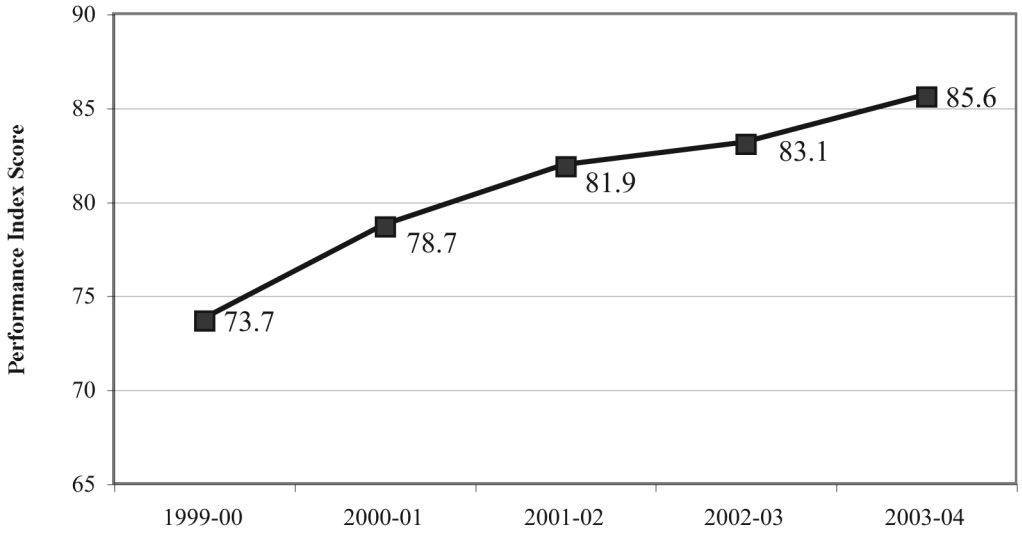
The reformulation of Ohio's statewide testing program is crucial to the development of a standards-based educational system. Results of statewide assessments can be used by parents, teachers and administrators to gauge student learning of important academic content. Parents can use individual student test reports to see how well their children are performing in relation to other students and compared to previous years. The results of standardized tests can highlight strengths and weaknesses in student achievement and serve to guide educators' curriculum-development activities.

Is Statewide Achievement Improving?

A variety of indicators demonstrate that achievement in Ohio is on the rise. For example, over the past five years, the average score on state tests has increased 11.9 points from 73.7 to 85.6, as measured by the performance index score (Figure 2.2). The performance index is a composite score that summarizes the performance of all students on all tests. Figure 2.2 and Table 2.3 compare the achievement of fourth and sixth graders over time.

Figure 2.2

Ohio Performance Index, 2000-2004
Composite of Grades 4 and 6 test scores



Notes: Data are from the 2003-04 State Report Card.
Figures include results from Grades 4 and 6 only.

Table 2.3 displays the shift in distribution of test results from 1999-2000 to 2003-04 that are reflected by the performance index. More students are scoring at higher levels than in the past, and fewer students are scoring at lower levels.

Table 2.3

Percentage of 4th and 6th Graders at each Performance Level
2000 and 2004

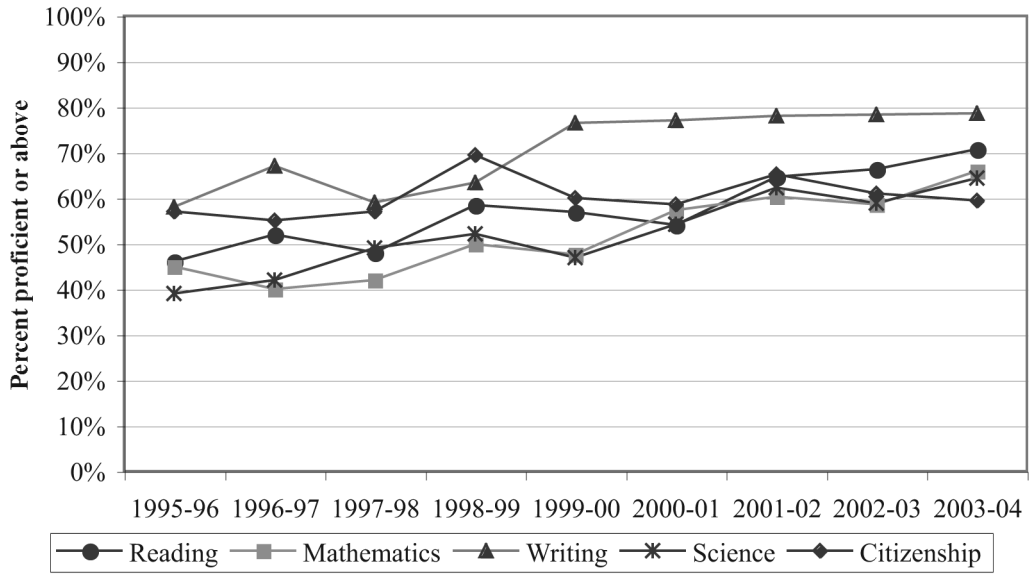
		1999-00		2003-04	
	Weight	Percentage	Points	Percentage	Points
Advanced	1.2	9.5%	11.4	18.6%	22.3
Proficient	1.0	46.2%	46.2	50.1%	50.1
Basic	0.6	15.2%	9.1	13.0%	7.8
Below Basic	0.3	23.4%	7.0	17.8%	5.3
Untested	0.0	5.7%	0.0	0.5%	0.0
Performance Index			73.7		85.6

Note: Data are from the 2003-04 State Report Card.

Gains in the percent of students who are reaching proficient or higher levels on Ohio proficiency tests are another reflection of rising achievement in Ohio. The proficient level indicates that students are performing to grade-level expectations. The following graphs display the proportion of students scoring proficient or higher in grades four, six and 10 in reading, mathematics, writing, science and citizenship since the inception of the proficiency testing program. In most subjects and grades, achievement in Ohio has improved over the past five to eight years. For example, proficiency rates on the fourth-grade reading test have improved from 46 percent in the first year the test was administered to 54.1 percent in 2000-01 to 70.8 percent in 2003-04.

Figure 2.4

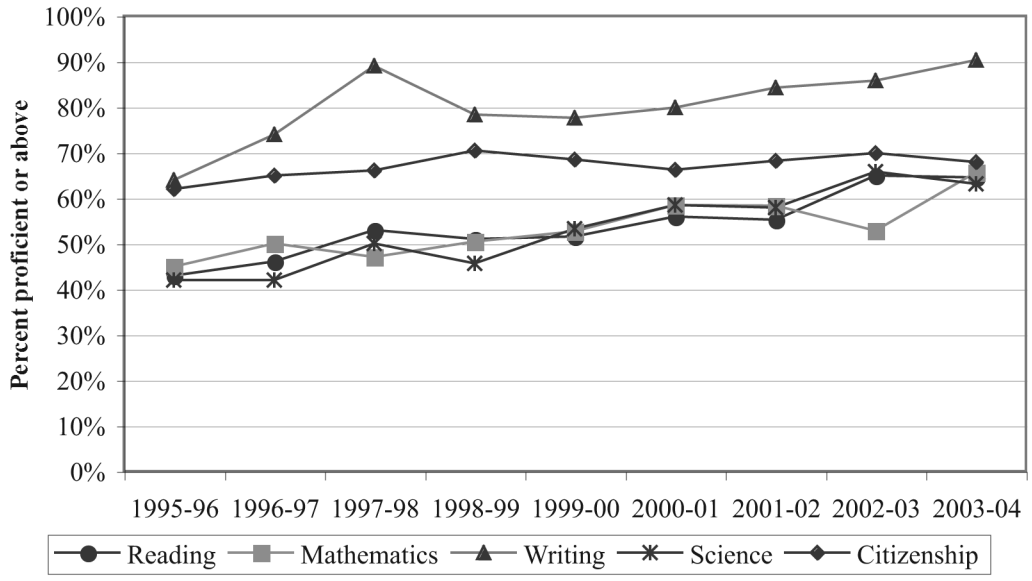
4th Graders Scoring Proficient or Above on Statewide Assessments, 1996-2004



Note: Data are from the Office of Assessment and from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.5

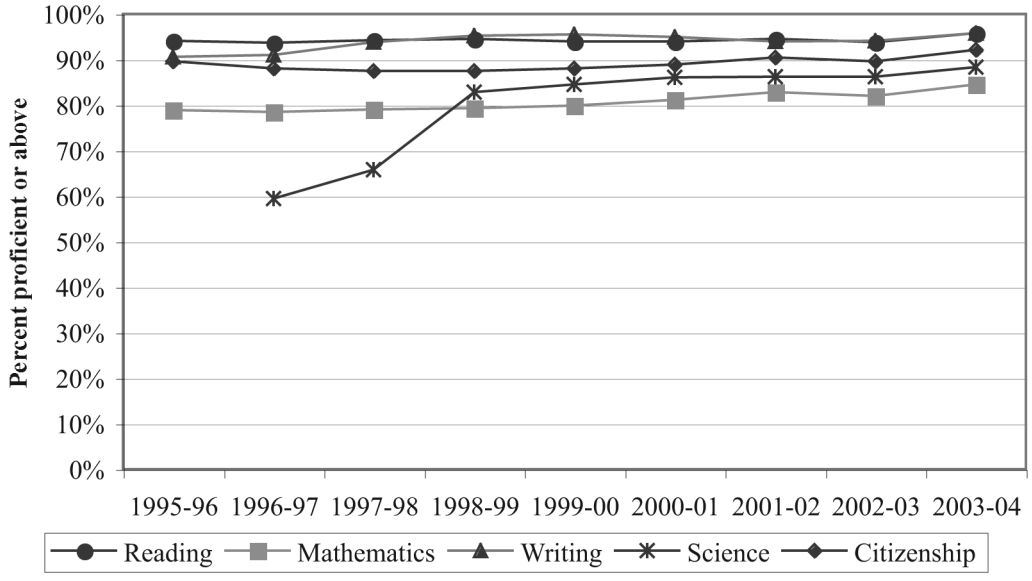
6th Graders Scoring Proficient or Above on Statewide Assessments, 1996-2004



Note: Data are from the Office of Assessment and from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.6

Cumulative Percent of 10th Graders Scoring Proficient or Above on 9th Grade Proficiency Tests, 1996-2004



Note: Data are from the Office of Assessment and from EMIS 2004.

Fourth-graders showed the greatest improvement in the percent scoring proficient or above in mathematics (7.2 point increase), science (5.5 point increase) and reading (4.5 point increase) compared to 2002-03. Sixth-graders showed strong gains in mathematics in the last year, improving the percent proficient or above by 12.8 percentage points.

Are all students represented in these data?

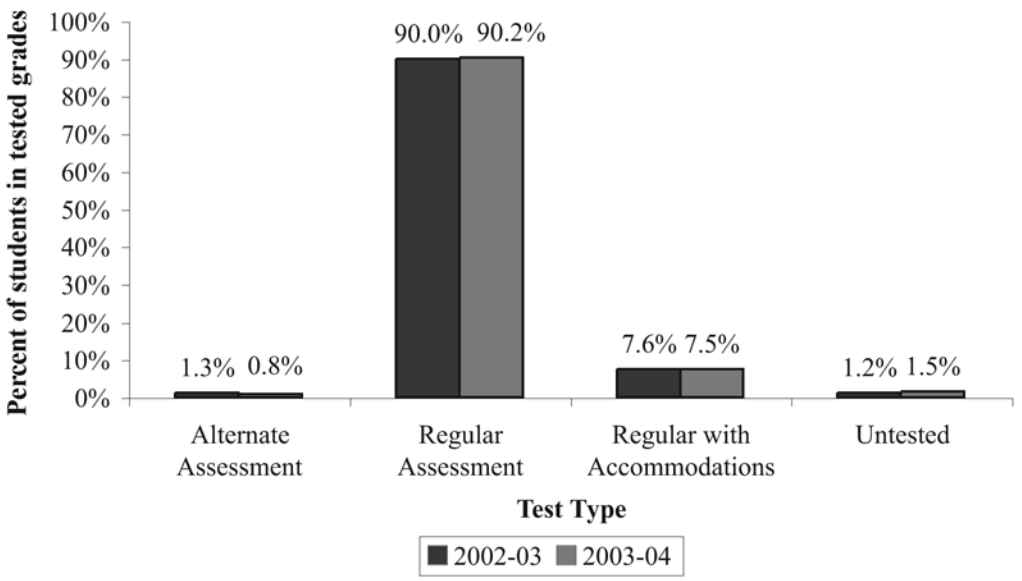
Federal and state legislation require that all students participate in grade-level assessment of educational progress. Since 2002-03, there has been a strong push to account for all students in Ohio's achievement scores. Students who were often excluded from school and district scores in the past (most notably students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency) have been included with achievement results in the past two years.

School districts in Ohio have been working to ensure that all students participate in the assessment that is appropriate to evaluate their abilities. Students who are not able to fully participate in the standard testing format because of limited language skills or disability are evaluated through alternate assessments or accommodated administrations of the standard assessments. The alternate assessments and accommodations are variations on the standard tests and are used to determine if students with learning challenges are developing appropriate grade-level academic skills. Standards-based alternate assessments were administered for the first time in the 2003-04 school year. Prior to this time, proficiency on alternate assessments was based on meeting Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals rather than evaluating student performance against Ohio's academic content standards.

Accommodated administrations of the standard assessment – such as extended time or dividing the assessment into smaller units with breaks in between – are sufficient to provide many students with disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement against the grade-level curriculum. Alternate assessments are an important component of a small number of students' curriculum. For students with the most severe cognitive disabilities, this collection of evidence model to document student performance of standards-based knowledge and skills is more appropriate than the standard assessment, with or without accommodations.

Figure 2.7

Participation in Annual Statewide Tests by Test Type, 2003-2004



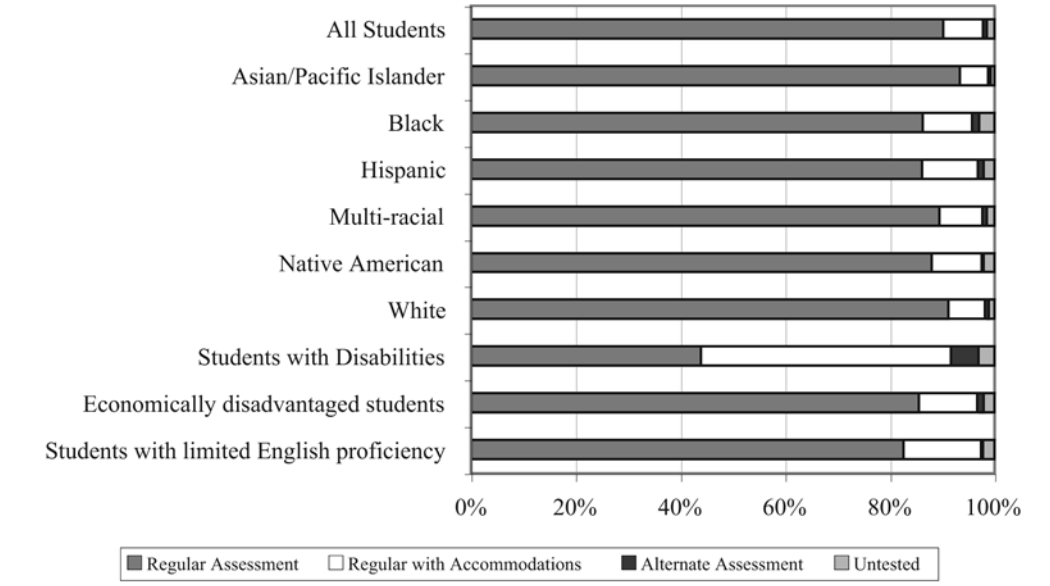
Note: Data are from EMIS 2004. The 2002-03 data include grades 4, 6 and 10. The data from 2003-04 include grades 3, 4 and OGT.

Figure 2.7 shows the proportion of students taking the various types of statewide tests for the past two years. In 2003-04, 90.2 percent of students tested took the regular assessment and an additional 7.5 percent of students took the standard assessment with accommodations. Less than 1 percent of students took the alternate assessments in 2003-04. More than 98 percent of students participated in statewide tests – less than 2 percent were not tested.

More Ohio students participated in regular assessments, and a lower percentage employed accommodations or the alternate form of the tests in the most recent year compared to 2002-03. Several factors may have influenced this change. For example, ODE instituted more extensive training for professionals involved with the education of students with disabilities. The Office for Exceptional Children and the Office of Assessment provided additional guidance on the appropriate use of alternate assessments and accommodations for students with disabilities. In addition, the 2003-04 school year was the first year of implementation of the federal limit on the percent of proficient scores on alternate assessments that could be included in accountability calculations. The Department continues to monitor participation patterns.

Figure 2.8

Participation in Annual Statewide Tests by Subgroup and Test Type, 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004. The data include grades 3, 4, 6 and OGT.

Figure 2.8 shows the proportion of students in each student group taking each form of the statewide tests during the 2003-04 school year. This figure includes participation in all subject tests for grades three, four and six, as well as the Ohio Graduation Tests. Participation in the regular form of the statewide tests was lowest for students with disabilities, followed by LEP students and economically disadvantaged students. In addition, Asian and White students were the only groups with more than 90 percent participation in the regular assessment. The greatest proportion of untested students was among students with disabilities, followed by Black and LEP students.

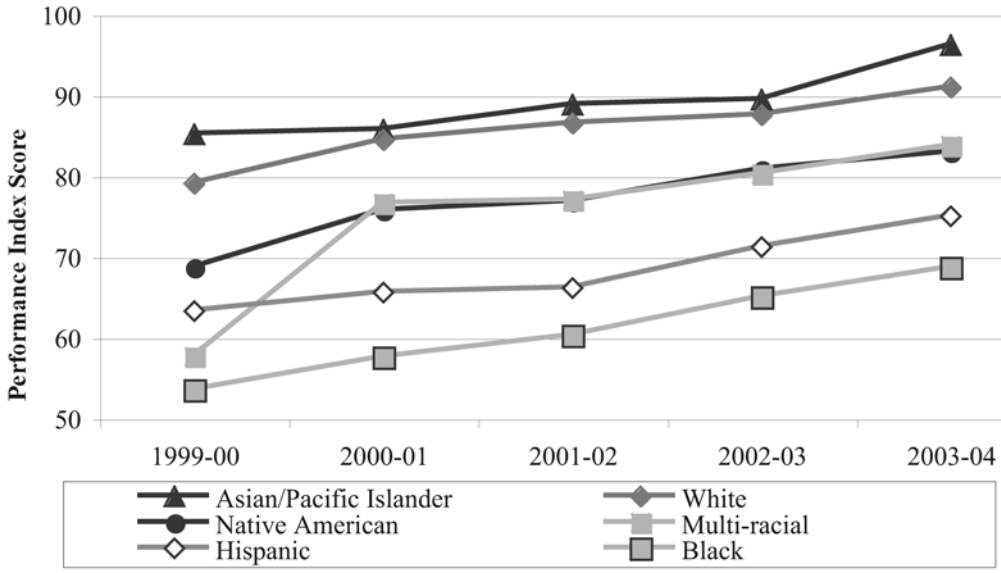
Are all groups of students enjoying the same level of academic success?

Student performance on Ohio's proficiency and achievement tests has been steadily increasing over the past five years. While statewide results are encouraging, achievement gaps between Ohio's highest- and lowest-performing students continue to pose a major challenge. Performance of groups of students on statewide tests is highlighted in this section.

The Ohio Department of Education and State Board of Education are dedicated to the proposition that virtually all students, if given appropriate educational opportunities, have the potential to reach grade-level academic expectations. Achievement data are presented disaggregated by race/ethnicity, economic status and disability status to highlight the areas where Ohio has yet to deliver on this proposition. The State Board of Education and ODE have identified achievement gaps as a key challenge facing the state.

Figure 2.9

Statewide Performance Index Trend by Race/Ethnicity, 2000-2004
Composite of Grades 4 and 6 test scores



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

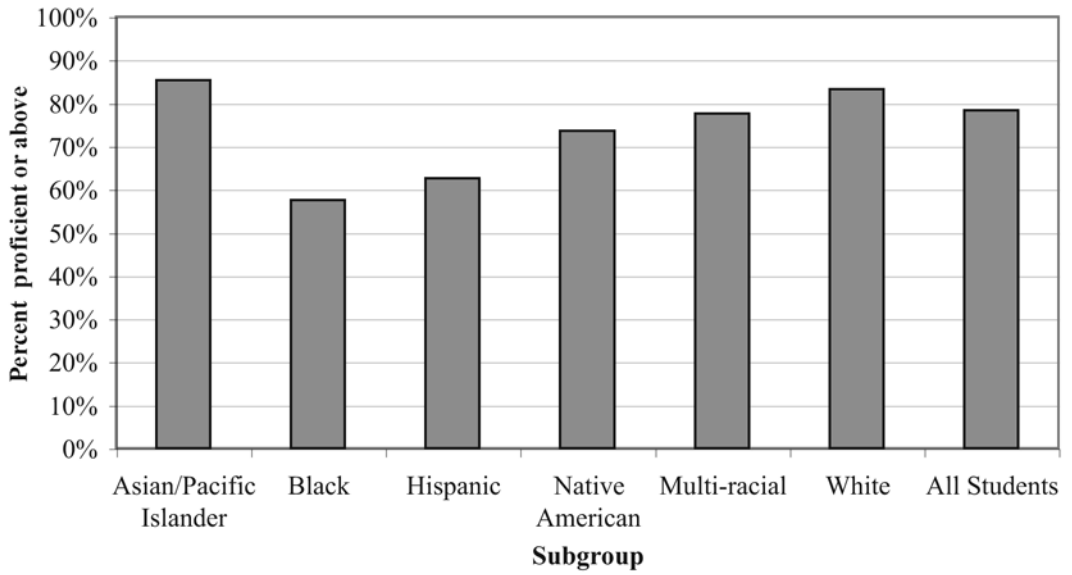
The disaggregated performance index in Figure 2.9 shows that students in all major racial/ethnic groups have experienced gains over the past five years. Black students have improved by more than 15 points (from 53.6 points in 1999-00 to 68.7 points in 2003-04). While gaps in achievement persist, the lowest-achieving groups have experienced some of the most substantial gains over the past five years.

Grade 3 Performance

The 2003-04 school year was the first year of statewide implementation of the Grade Three Reading Achievement Test. The following figures display the percent of students performing at the proficient or higher level on the third-grade test. The data are displayed for all students as well as for groups of students.

Figure 2.10

Grade 3 Reading Performance for All Students and by Race/Ethnicity, 2004

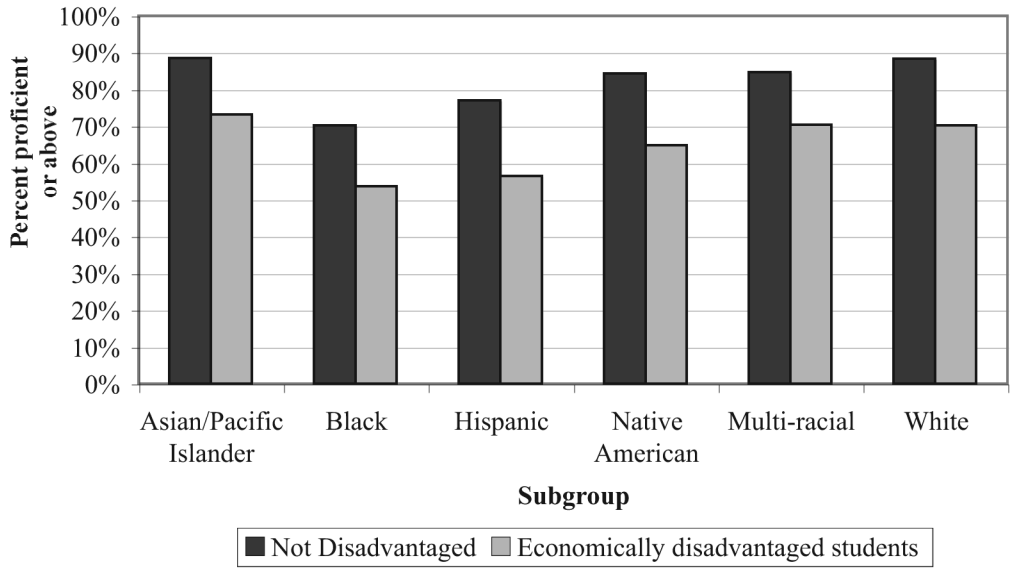


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.10 shows that in the first year of administration, 78.2 percent of third-grade students scored at the proficient or above level on the Reading Achievement Test. More than 75 percent of Asian, Multi-racial and White students demonstrated proficient or higher performance. Smaller proportions of Hispanic, Black and Native American students attained the proficient level, with less than 60 percent of Black students reaching the third-grade goal.

Figure 2.11

Grade 3 Reading Performance by Economic Status and Race/Ethnicity 2004



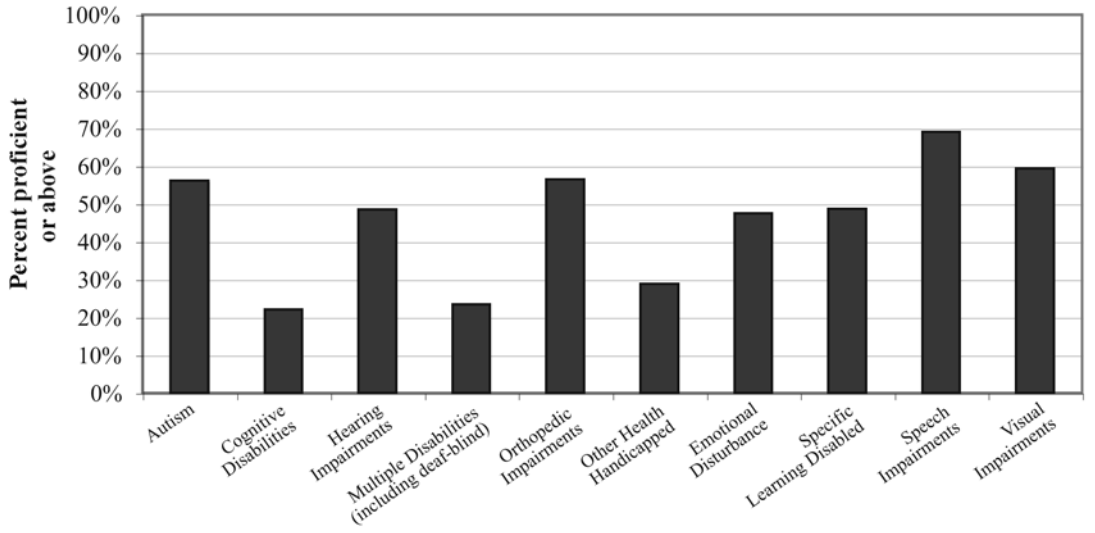
Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.11 shows the Grade Three Reading Achievement scores by race/ethnicity and economic status. This figure shows that economically disadvantaged students from each racial/ethnic group perform at lower levels than their non-disadvantaged peers.

With increased emphasis on including all students in assessment results, there is growing interest in the performance of students with disabilities. Figure 2.12 displays the results of the Grade Three Reading Achievement Test for students with disabilities by disability type. The highest-performing group was students with speech impairments (69 percent), followed by students with visual handicaps (59.4 percent) and students with other health impairments (57.2 percent). The lowest-performing group was students with developmental handicaps (22 percent).

Figure 2.12

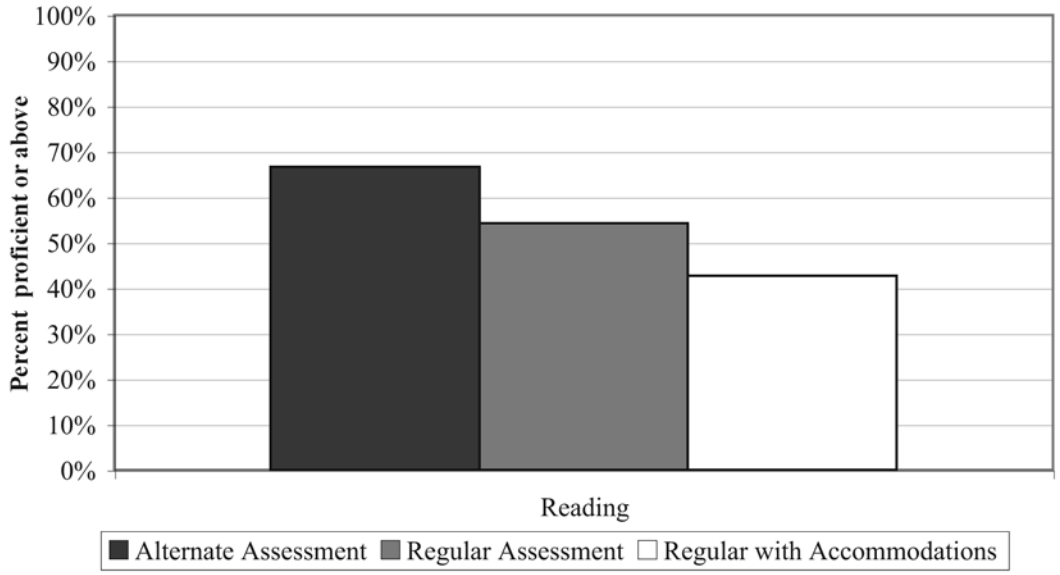
Grade 3 Reading Performance by Disability Type, 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.13

Grade 3 Reading Performance for Students with Disabilities by Test Type 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

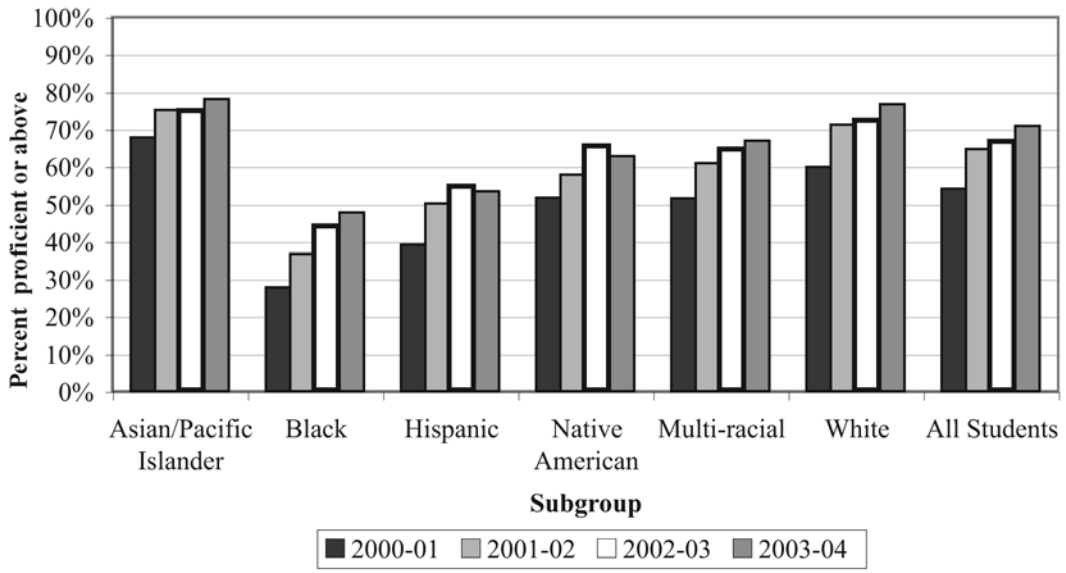
Students with disabilities participated in various forms of the Grade Three Reading Achievement Test. Figure 2.13 shows that the highest passage rates for students with disabilities were on the alternate assessment, which 5 percent of students with disabilities took. Fifty-seven percent of students with disabilities participated in the regular assessment, and achieved a 54.2 percent passage rate. Approximately 38 percent of students with disabilities took the regular assessment with accommodations. Among this group, 42.6 percent of the students achieved proficient or above scores.

Grade 4 Performance

The Fourth-Grade Proficiency Test has been administered yearly since March 1995. The 2003-04 school year was the final administration of the Fourth-Grade Reading and Writing Proficiency Tests, which are being replaced in 2004-05 by subject-level achievement tests that are aligned with Ohio's academic content standards. The Fourth-Grade Proficiency Tests in mathematics, science and social studies will be administered once more, in 2004-05.

Figure 2.14

Grade 4 Reading Performance for All Students and by Race/Ethnicity, 2001-2004

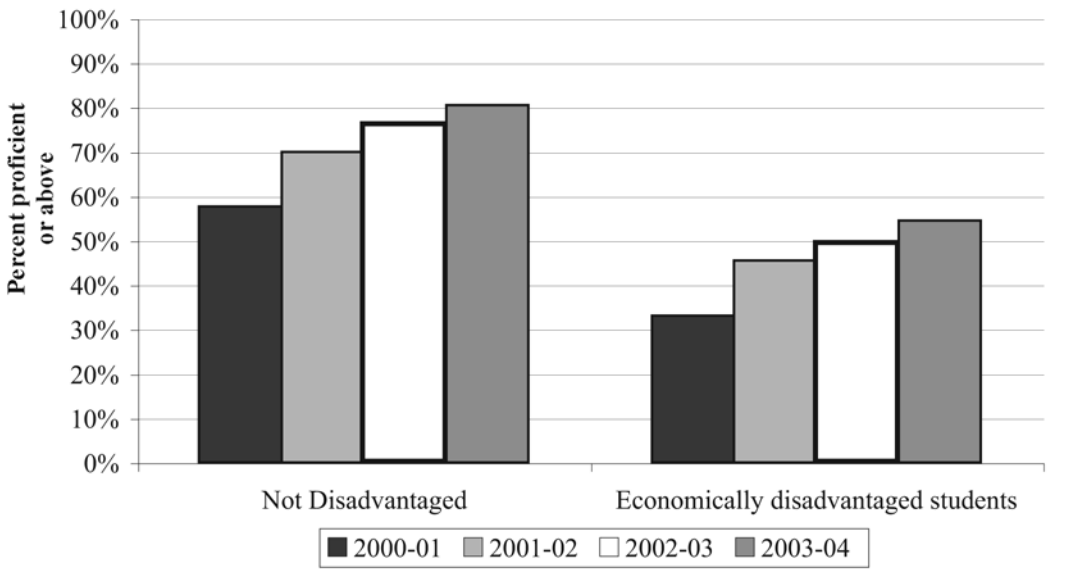


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.14 shows that the performance of all students, as well as students from the major racial/ethnic groups, has steadily increased. Black students experienced the largest increase, from 27.8 percent proficient or above in 2000-01 to 47.7 percent in 2003-04. During the same four-year period, the achievement gap between the highest (Asian) and lowest (Black) performing groups declined by 9.5 percentage points.

Figure 2.15

Grade 4 Reading Performance by Economic Status, 2001-2004

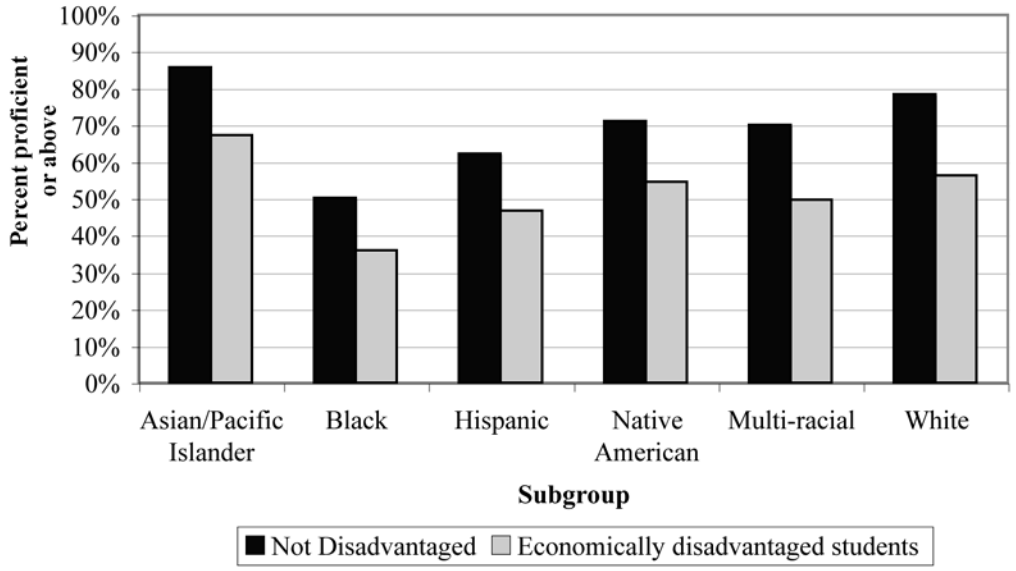


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.15 shows the four-year improvement trend in reading for economically disadvantaged students. Between 2000-01 and 2003-04, the percent of economically disadvantaged students performing at the proficient or higher level increased by more than 20 points. However, since the performance of nondisadvantaged students experienced a similar increase, the achievement gap for disadvantaged versus nondisadvantaged students has not narrowed.

Figure 2.16

Grade 4 Mathematics Performance by Economic Status and Race/Ethnicity, 2004

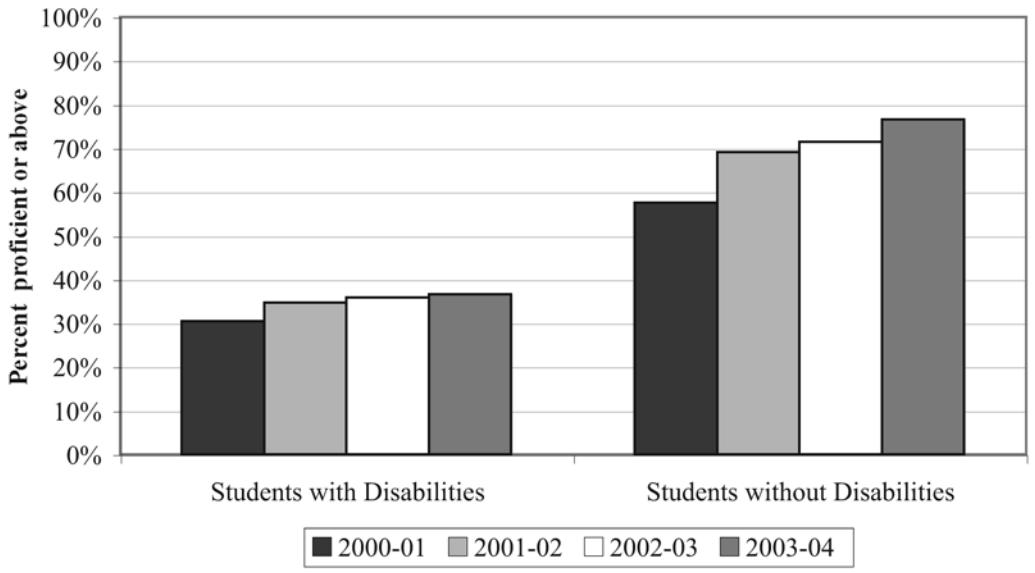


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Over the past three years, mathematics scores for fourth-grade students also have increased steadily. Figure 2.16 shows the percentage of students performing at the proficient or above levels in mathematics by race/ethnicity and economic status in 2003-04. While most groups of students have experienced gains in the past three years, significant gaps in achievement by race and economic status remain. For example, economically disadvantaged White students outperformed non-disadvantaged Black students.

Figure 2.17

Grade 4 Reading Performance by Disability Status, 2001-2004

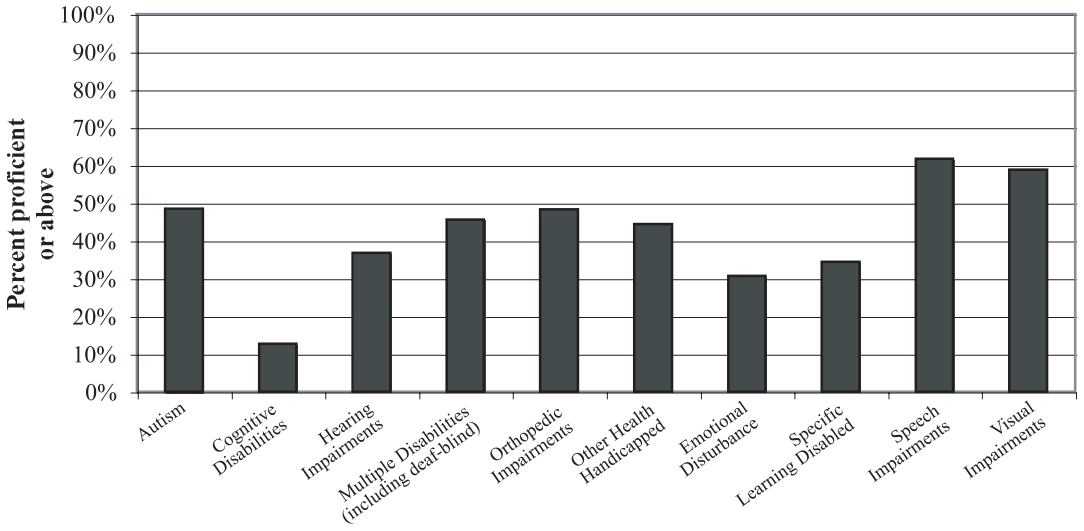


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

The performance of students with disabilities on the Fourth-Grade Proficiency Test in reading also increased. Figure 2.17 shows that the percent of students performing at or above the proficient levels in this group has increased by 6.1 percentage points over the past four years. This increase has occurred in the midst of policy changes that require all students with disabilities be tested. While the increased percent of those students deemed proficient has been relatively small, the tested population includes more students. For example, there were 17,312 students with disabilities taking the Fourth-Grade Proficiency Test in reading in 2000-01; that number increased to 19,582 students in 2003-04.

Figure 2.18

Grade 4 Reading Performance by Disability Type, 2004

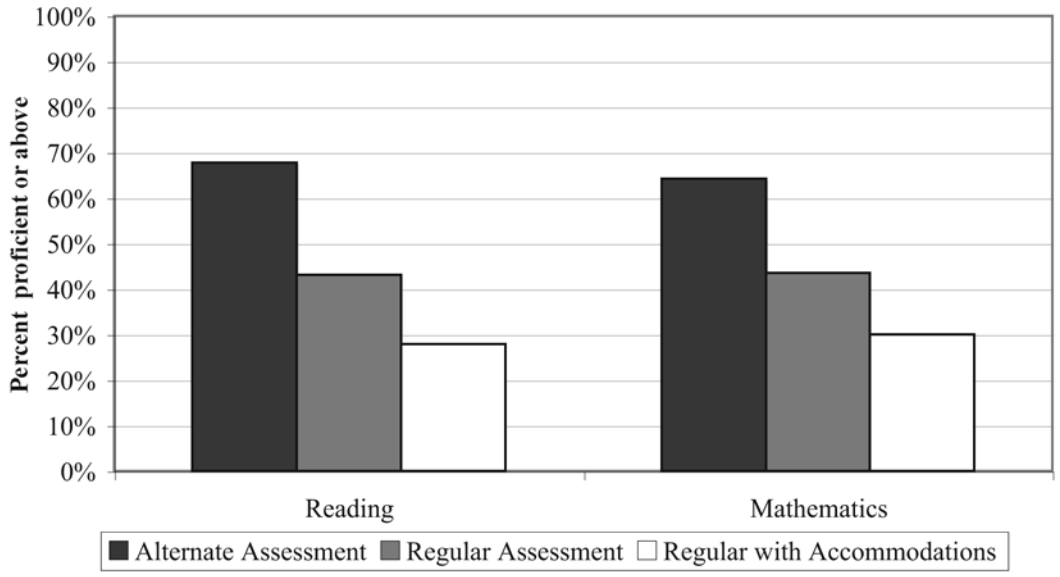


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.18 shows passage rates on the Fourth-Grade Proficiency Test in reading by disability type. The highest proficiency rates were for speech (61.8 percent proficient) and visually handicapped students (58.9 percent proficient), while students with cognitive disabilities experienced the lowest passage rates (12.6 percent).

Figure 2.19

Grade 4 Reading and Mathematics Performance for Students with Disabilities by Test Type, 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.19 shows the performance of students with disabilities on the various forms of the Fourth-Grade Proficiency Tests in reading and mathematics. Six percent of students with disabilities participated in the standards-based alternate assessments in reading and mathematics. These students had relatively high passage rates (67.8 percent in reading and 64.2 percent in mathematics) compared to students with disabilities who participated in the regular assessments, with or without accommodations. About one-half of fourth-grade students with disabilities took the regular tests with accommodations.

Performance of Students in Community Schools

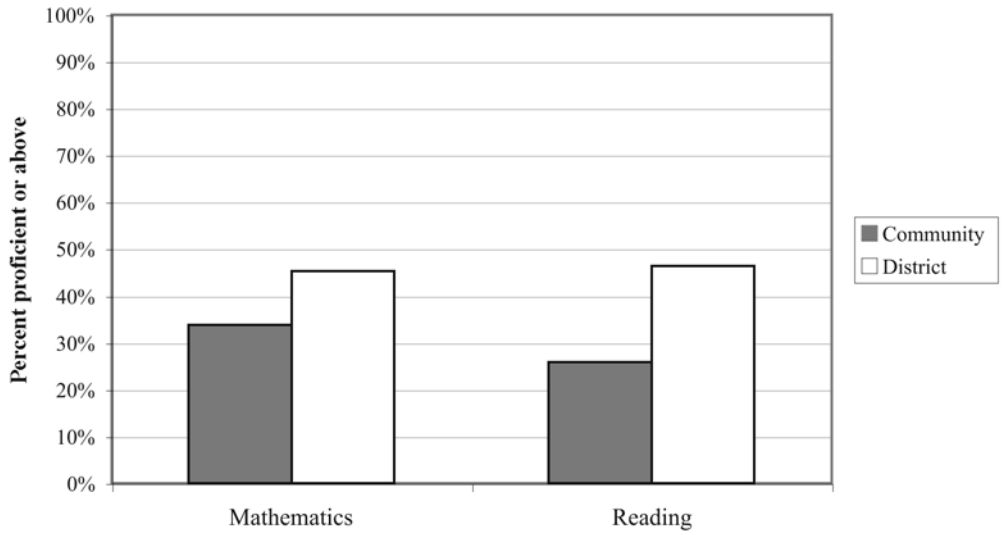
Over the past four years, an increasing number of students have been educated in community schools. Community schools typically are located in urban districts and in districts that have been placed in Academic Watch or Academic Emergency, so the student populations of these schools include students who experience economic and/or academic challenges. Because there are differences in the student populations of community schools compared to traditional public schools as a whole, the following analysis shows how students in community schools are performing compared to students in the districts where community schools are located. This allows for comparison of the two populations of students that experience similar social, economic and academic conditions.

It should be noted that there is substantial debate about the types of analyses that should be used to best assess the performance of community schools. ODE does not consider the following comparison to be a definitive analysis of the performance of community schools and districts that serve similar students. It is, however, one indicator of relative performance. As longitudinal data become increasingly robust, ODE will be better positioned to compare the performance of community schools to schools serving similar populations.

For the purposes of the community school analyses, digital schools and community schools are treated as separate groups. Digital schools are not included with other community schools because of the different populations served by these two distinct types of school.

Figure 2.20

Grade 6 Reading and Mathematics Performance for Community Schools and Comparable Districts, 2004



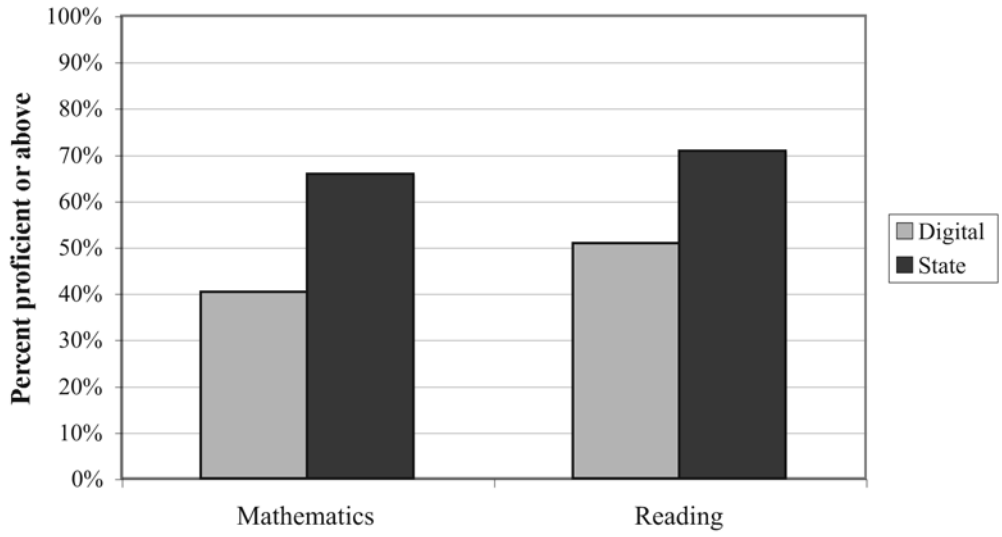
Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

In aggregate, the mathematics and reading scores for fourth-grade students in community schools were lower than for students who attended traditional public schools in the surrounding districts. In the most recent school year, 27.6 percent of fourth-grade students in community schools performed at or above the proficient level on the mathematics proficiency test compared to 49.4 percent of students in the surrounding public school districts.

Another type of community school is a digital school, which can be located in any district and can draw its students from across the state. There is increasing interest in digital schools as alternatives to traditional public schools, and as alternatives or supplements to home schooling for many students.

Figure 2.21

Grade 4 Reading and Mathematics Performance for Digital Schools and State, 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

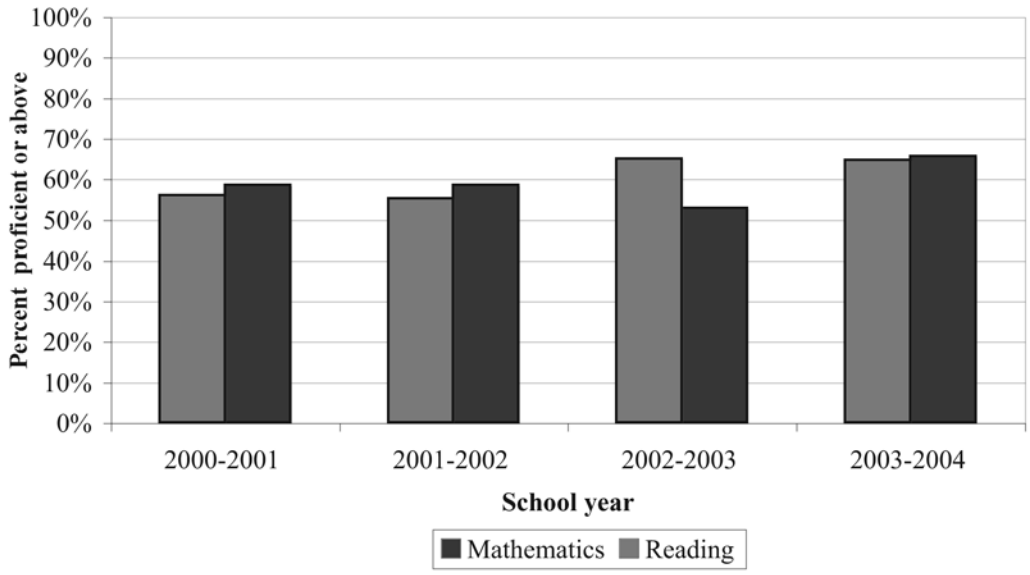
In digital schools, 40.3 percent of fourth-grade students scored proficient or above on the mathematics test and 50.3 percent of students scored proficient or above on the reading test in 2003-04 (Figure 2.21). Students across the state had higher proficiency rates on the Fourth-Grade Proficiency Tests in reading and mathematics than the students attending digital schools.

Grade 6 Performance

Implemented in March 1996, Ohio's Sixth-Grade Proficiency Tests will be administered in all five subjects for the final time during the 2004-05 school year. They will then be replaced by achievement tests.

Figure 2.22

Grade 6 Reading and Mathematics Performance, 2001-2004

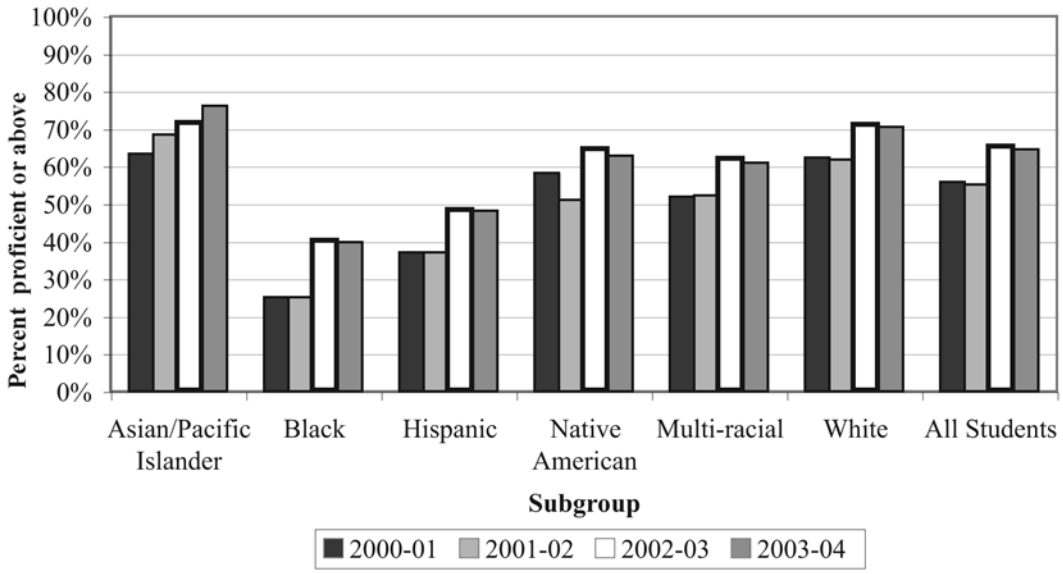


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.22 shows the performance of all students in reading and mathematics. Statewide, the percent proficient has increased 9 percentage points from 2000-01 to 2003-04 in reading and 6 percentage points in mathematics.

Figure 2.23

Grade 6 Reading Performance for All Students and by Race/Ethnicity, 2001-2004

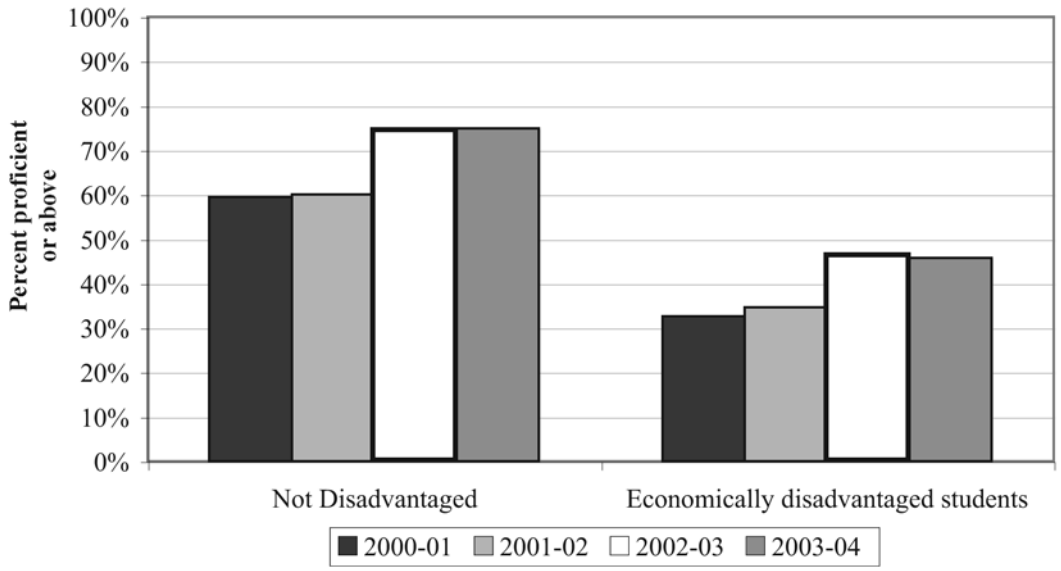


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Reading scores for all students and every ethnic group except Asian students declined in 2003-04 after two previous years of growth (Figure 2.23). As with other tested grades, the sixth-grade results show a substantial gap between the highest- and lowest-performing racial/ethnic groups. Although the percentage of Black students scoring at or above proficient since 2000-01 has increased 14.7 points in reading, the gap is 36.4 percentage points between Black and Asian students.

Figure 2.24

Grade 6 Reading Performance by Economic Status, 2001-2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

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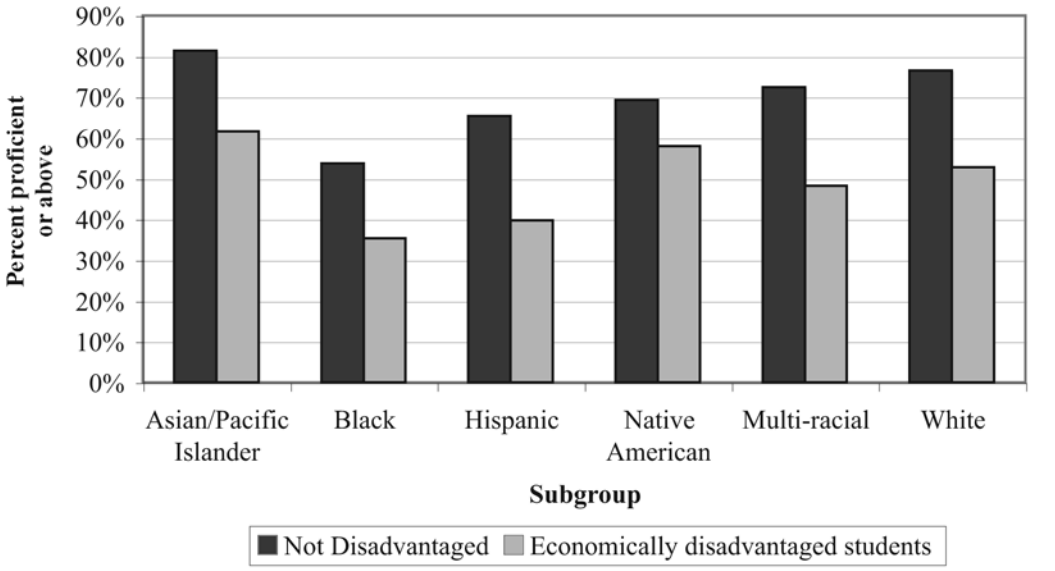
Economically disadvantaged students have experienced increased performance on the Sixth-Grade Proficiency Test in reading in the past four years. The percent of economically disadvantaged students performing at the proficient level or above has increased from 32.6 percent in 2000-01 to 45.7 percent in 2003-04 (Figure 2.24). Students who are not disadvantaged also have improved their proficiency rates in the same time period, resulting in a 29-percentage-point gap between the two groups in the most recent year of testing.

Figure 2.25

Grade 6 Reading Performance by Economic Status and Race/Ethnicity, 2004

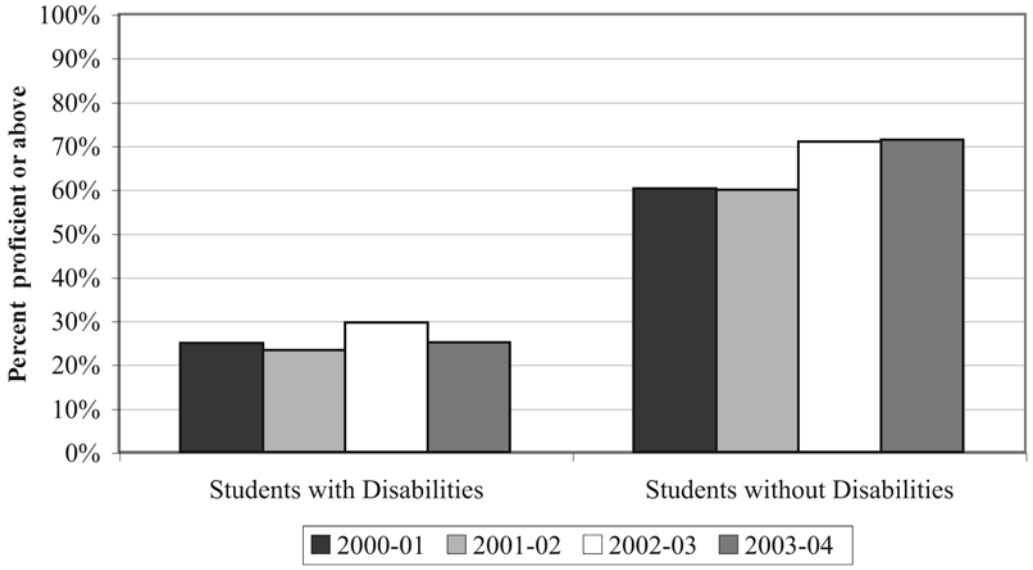


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

As with other grades, when the economic status of sixth-graders is taken into consideration, there is a gap between nondisadvantaged and economically disadvantaged students. All groups of students who are nondisadvantaged perform at higher achievement levels than their disadvantaged counterparts in reading, as shown in Figure 2.25.

Figure 2.26

Grade 6 Reading Performance by Disability Status, 2001-2004

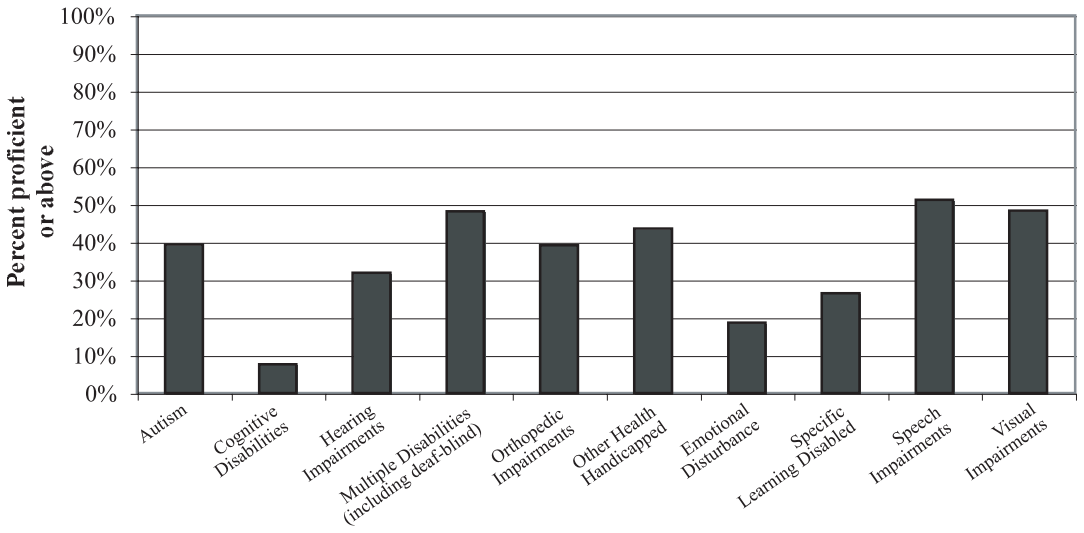


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Scores on the Sixth-Grade Proficiency Test in reading have remained relatively stable in the past four years for students with disabilities (Figure 2.26). For students without disabilities, passage rates have increased in the past two years after two years of stable performance.

Figure 2.27

Grade 6 Reading Performance by Disability Type, 2004

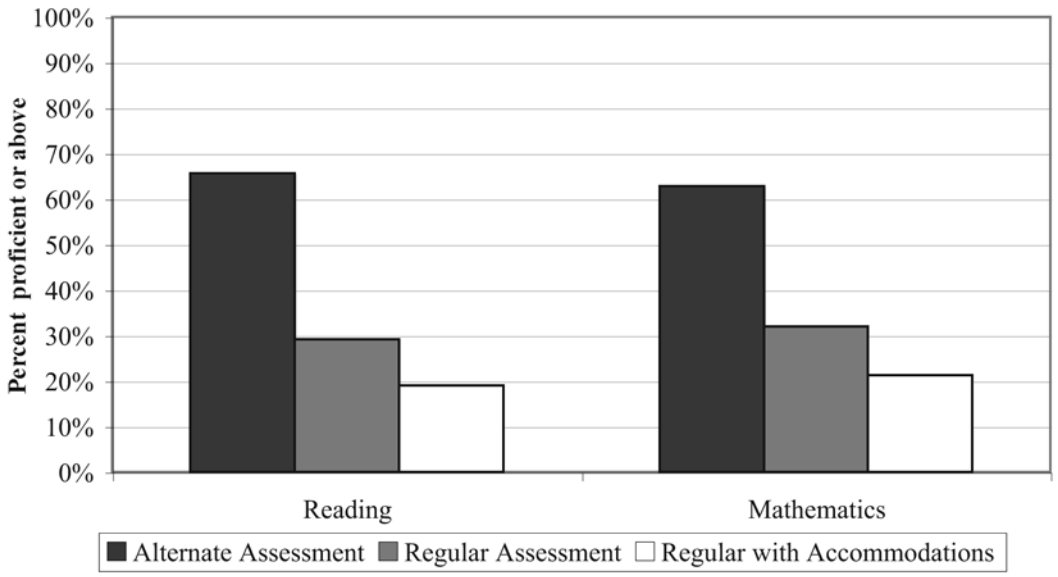


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

When examined by disability type, students with disabilities perform at varying levels on the Sixth-Grade Proficiency Test in reading. Students with speech, visual and multiple handicaps perform at higher levels than students with cognitive and severe behavior handicaps.

Figure 2.28

Grade 6 Reading and Mathematics Performance for Students with Disabilities by Test Type, 2004

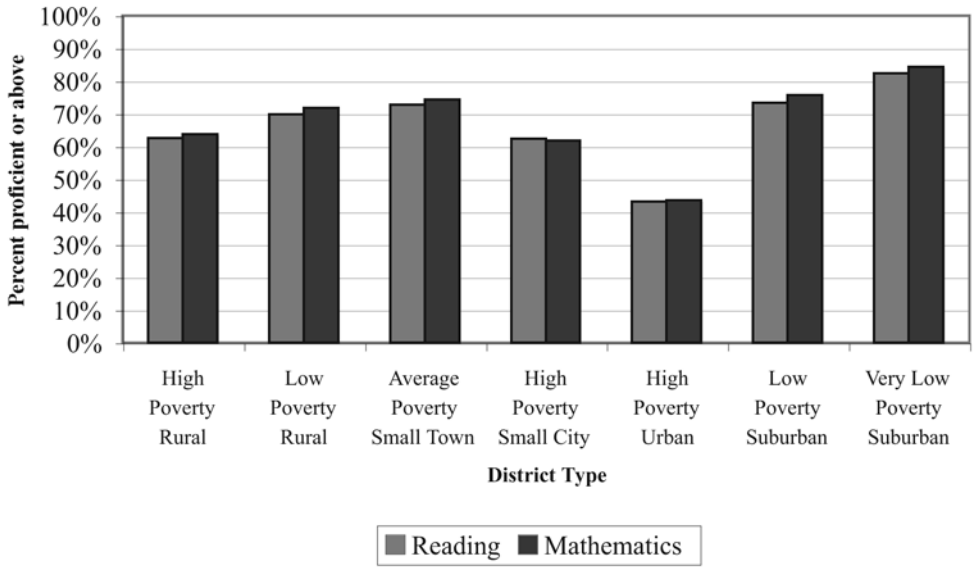


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Fifty-five percent of students with disabilities who took the Sixth-Grade Proficiency Tests in 2003-04 participated in the regular assessments with accommodations. These students experienced relatively low levels of passage on the test, with 19.1 scoring proficient or above in reading and 21.3 scoring proficient or above in mathematics (Figure 2.28). While only 6 percent of students with disabilities participated in the sixth-grade standards-based alternate assessments, these students had the highest passage rates (65.6 percent proficient in reading and 62.9 percent proficient in mathematics).

Figure 2.29

Grade 6 Reading and Mathematics Performance by District Type, 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Another way to examine performance is by looking at districts based on community characteristics. Figure 2.29 demonstrates the reading and mathematics performance levels of districts based on community characteristics. Only suburban, high socioeconomic-status districts consistently achieved 75 percent or higher proficiency rates in reading and mathematics in 2003-04. Within the other district types, however, there are districts and schools with achievement levels commensurate with suburban, high socioeconomic-status districts.

How Are Students Performing on the Ohio Graduation Tests?

Critical to advancing high school reform is creating high expectations for students and holding high schools accountable for the academic skills of their graduating students. The Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) is the primary measure of whether Ohio students have mastered the academic content standards developed by Ohio educators. The OGT ensures that students who receive a high school diploma demonstrate at least high school levels of achievement in core subjects.

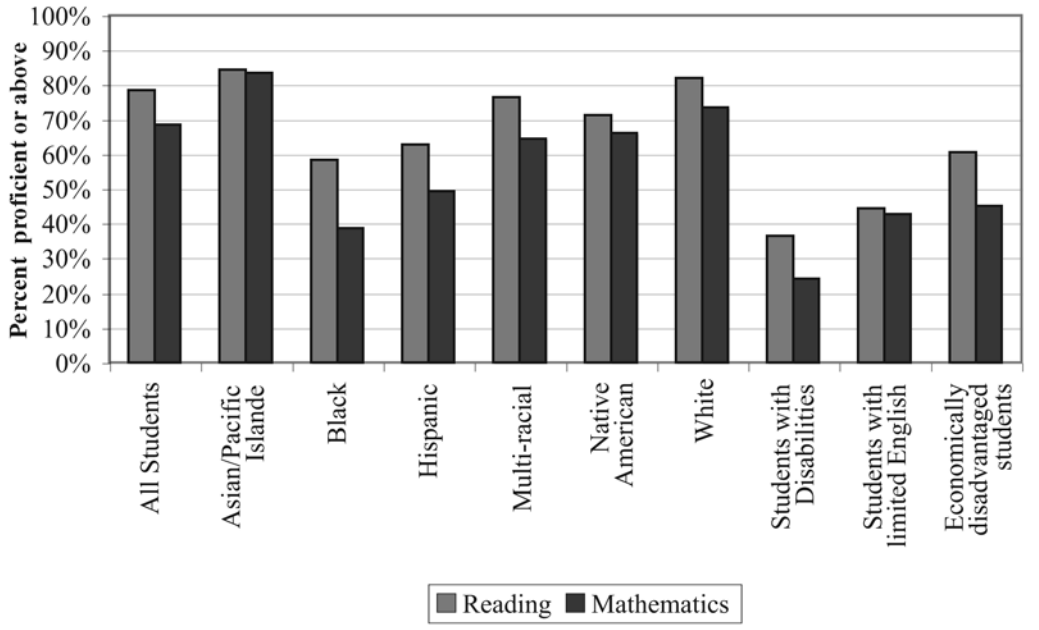
The OGT replaces the Ohio Ninth-Grade Proficiency Test as a graduation requirement beginning with the class of 2007. Whereas the Ninth-Grade Proficiency Test is an evaluation of student performance on primarily pre-high school level academics, the OGT measures student performance against 10th-grade academic expectations.

ODE created the baseline standards for this new test by administering the reading and mathematics sections to 10th-graders in March 2004. The full array of tests will include measures of writing, science and social studies knowledge and skills. The OGT classifies student performance according to five performance levels (Advanced, Accelerated, Proficient, Basic, Limited) in contrast to the Proficient/Not Proficient classification of Ninth-Grade Proficiency Test scores. A score of advanced, accelerated or proficient is considered passing on the OGT.

There are several factors to consider when comparing the 2003-04 data from the initial administration of the OGT to the results of the Ninth-Grade Proficiency Test. First, the 10th-graders who were tested under the first implementation have not experienced the cumulative benefits of an aligned curriculum throughout their school careers. While this class performed strongly on the OGT exams, their performance is not necessarily comparable to the performance of future classes whose high school instruction is fully aligned. Each advancing cohort will have experienced instruction that is more consistent with Ohio's academic content standards, making it likely they will be better prepared to succeed on the OGT. Second, comparisons between the OGT and the Ohio Ninth-Grade Proficiency Test should take into account the fact that the OGT is based on 10th-grade academic expectations and is designed to be taken by students who are further along in their academic careers. Third, beginning with the class of 2007 (2004-05 10th-graders), students will have to demonstrate proficiency in all five subjects.

Figure 2.30

OGT Reading and Mathematics Performance by Subgroup, 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.30 illustrates the numbers of 10th-grade students who achieved proficient or higher scores on the OGT in reading or mathematics in March 2004. Data are shown based on race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability status and primary language status.

Overall, students scored higher in reading than in mathematics. Four out of six ethnic groups had more than 70 percent proficiency in reading and more than 60 percent proficiency in mathematics. The two lowest-performing student groups were students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. As with fourth- and sixth-grade results, there is significant disparity between the achievement of White students and Black or Hispanic students.

Table 2.31

OGT Reading and Mathematics Performance by Gender and Subgroup, 2004

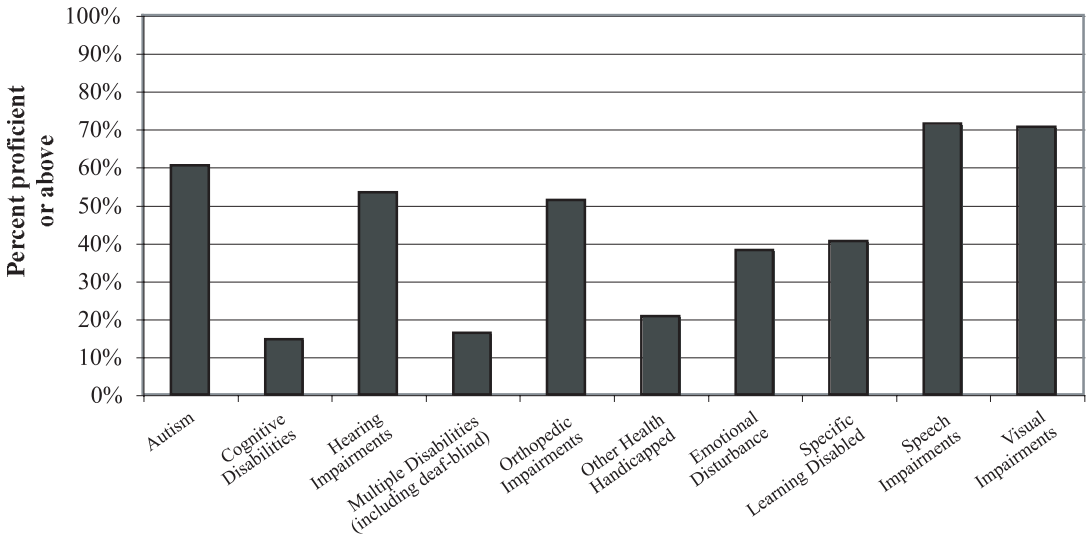
Group	Reading		Mathematics	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Asian/Pacific Islander	78.8%	90.2%	80.5%	86.6%
Black	49.8%	66.1%	36.4%	40.5%
Hispanic	54.9%	70.3%	48.0%	50.4%
Multi-racial	69.5%	82.5%	61.7%	66.7%
Native American	62.3%	80.8%	65.8%	66.2%
White	76.1%	88.1%	71.3%	75.7%
Economically disadvantaged students	65.4%	75.0%	51.1%	53.5%
Students with limited English proficiency	41.3%	47.61%	44.0%	41.4%
Students with disabilities	34.4%	40.0%	25.9%	20.9%

Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

There is disparity in the proficiency rates of males and females, with females generally outperforming male students on both tests. This difference in scores is less pronounced in mathematics than in reading.

Figure 2.32

OGT Reading Performance by Disability Type, 2004

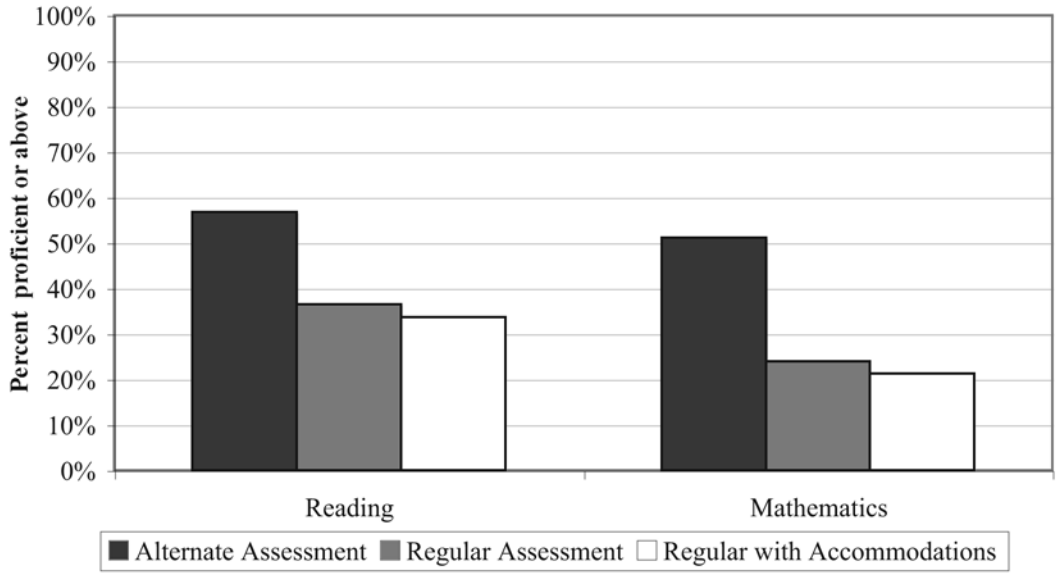


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

More than 70 percent of speech and visually handicapped students reached the proficient standard on the reading portion of the Ohio Graduation Test.

Figure 2.33

OGT Reading and Mathematics Performance for Students with Disabilities by Test Type, 2004

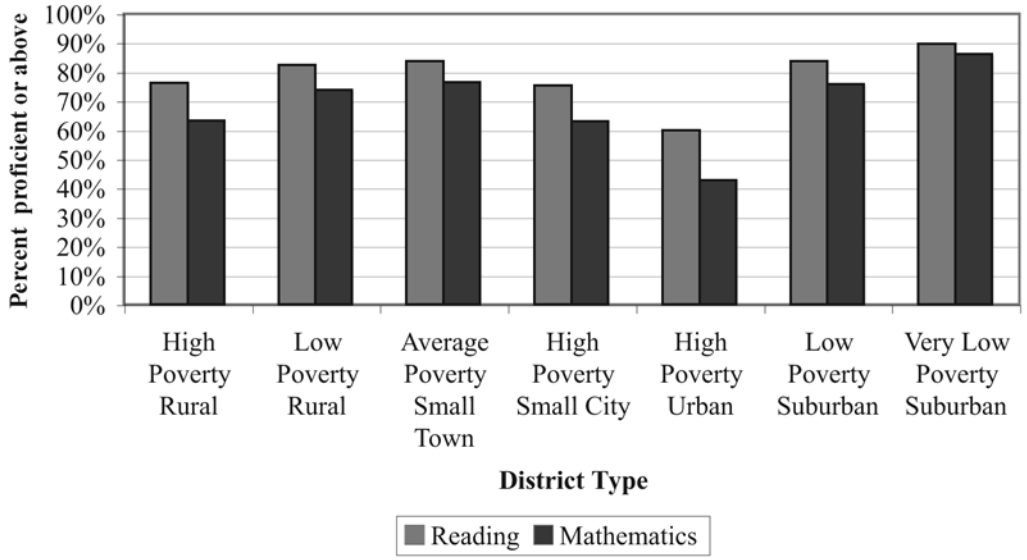


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 2.33 shows the percentage of students with disabilities who scored proficient or above on the OGT reading and mathematics assessment by test type. Students with disabilities have the highest passage rates on alternate assessments in comparison to all other test types.

Figure 2.34

OGT Reading and Mathematics Performance by District Type, 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

OGT performance also varies by district type or location, as shown in Figure 2.34. As with other OGT groupings, students in all districts show a higher percent proficient on the reading test than on the mathematics test. Suburban school districts with high socioeconomic status generally show the strongest performance in the state. Small town and rural districts with varying levels of poverty also show a high percent proficient on both the reading and mathematics assessments. Within each district type, however, there are higher- and lower-performing high schools.

How is Ohio addressing achievement gaps?

The data presented in the preceding figures demonstrates that while students are achieving at higher levels, significant gaps in achievement remain. The fact that economically disadvantaged and minority students tend to perform lower than other students is cause for concern among education leaders.

Research has identified a variety of factors that show a statistical relationship to the achievement gap: students' racial and/or economic background, their parents' education level, their access to high-quality preschool instruction, peer influences, teachers' expectations, and curricular and instructional quality. There also is a small but growing body of evidence on the effectiveness of various reforms and strategies that states, districts and schools are using to help lift the achievement of poor and minority students – from class-size reduction and increased testing, to vouchers and expanded early childhood education programs (Education Commission of the States).

Closing the achievement gap is one of Ohio's top priorities. To close achievement gaps between Ohio's highest- and lowest-performing students, ODE is now focusing reform efforts more closely on aligning the state's preschool-16 system, from early childhood education through the high school experience and on to postsecondary education. For example, the focus of the next State Board of Education task force will be early learning and school readiness.

In October 2002, the State Board of Education established a task force to study gaps in achievement and make recommendations to close and ultimately eliminate those gaps. One of the recommendations of the Closing Achievement Gaps Task Force included building upon the successes of Ohio schools that have narrowed achievement gaps and generated high achievement for all students. To facilitate this recommendation, the *Schools of Promise* program recognizes schools with high levels of performance despite demographic profiles that are typically associated with low performance. This program identifies successful schools with high percentages of minority and economically disadvantaged students who are achieving at high levels and disseminates information about the schools' practices.

Section 5 includes research on the 2003-04 *Schools of Promise* that highlights how these schools are similar yet unique in comparison to other schools across the state.

How are Ohio students Performing on National Assessments?

Solid achievement on state tests parallels strong Ohio performance on national measures. To understand how Ohio students are doing in comparison to students in other states and the nation, data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) are used. Results on NAEP reveal that Ohio students are outperforming students in most states, both in terms of the most recent (2003) scores and in terms of gains over the past decade. Section 3 presents data related to Ohio's performance on the ACT and SAT I – two additional national assessments.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

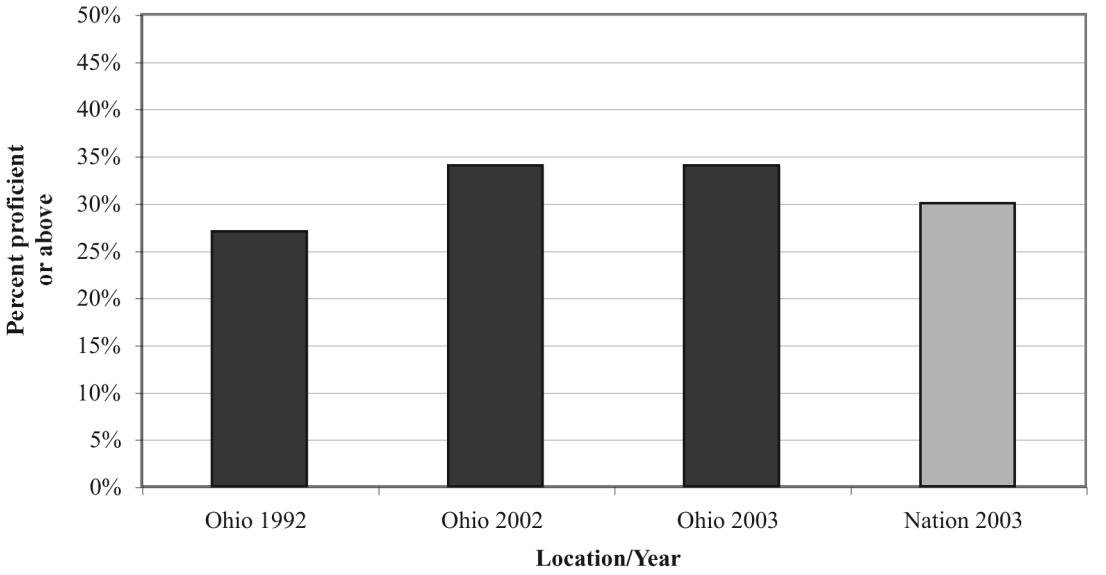
NAEP provides a measure of how Ohio's students are performing compared to students in other states and the nation as a whole. Ohio has participated in various administrations of the fourth- and eighth-grade NAEP reading and mathematics assessments since 1992. Rather than testing all students in each state, NAEP employs a design where a sample of schools and students is selected to represent each state. About 2,500 students from approximately 100 schools are selected per grade, for each subject assessed. The selection of schools is random, within classes of schools with similar characteristics.

It is important to understand that NAEP was developed independently of state assessments. Even though NAEP reports results according to performance levels, there was no attempt to equate proficiency on NAEP to proficiency on state tests. Most analyses of NAEP performance levels have concluded that NAEP sets a more difficult standard than most state assessments. As a result, for most states, the proportion of students achieving the Basic, Proficient or Advanced levels is substantially lower for NAEP than for the state assessment.

Beginning in 2002-03, all states were required to participate in NAEP. Previously, state participation was voluntary.

Figure 2.35

Ohio and National Grade 4 Reading
Percent Proficient or Above on NAEP, 1992-2003

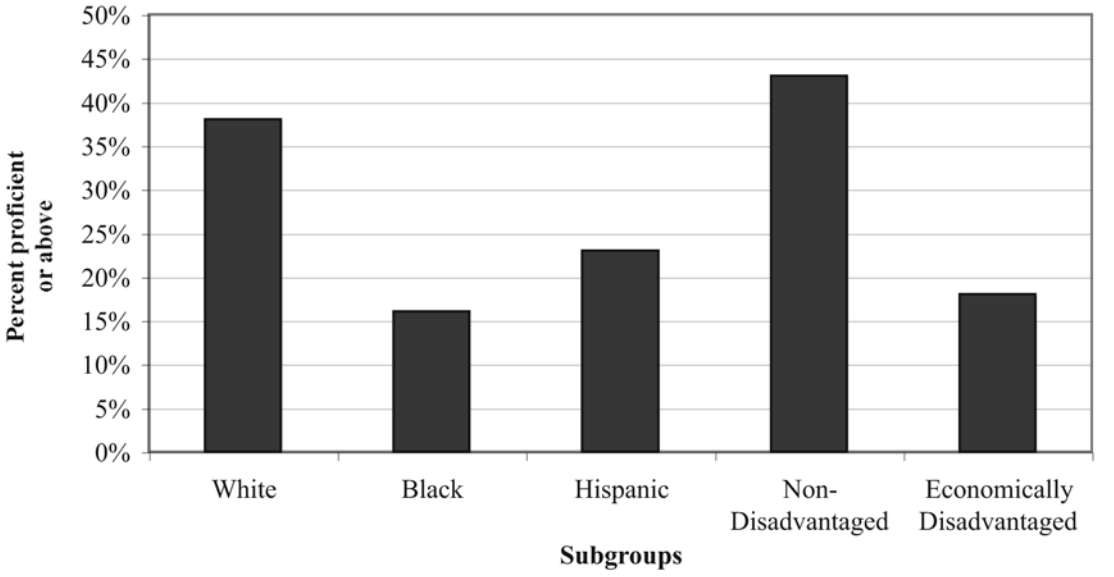


Note: Data are from NAEP.

Figure 2.35 shows that the proportion of Ohio fourth-graders scoring proficient and above increased 7 percentage points from 27 percent in 1992 to 34 percent in 2003. In the most recent year that NAEP was administered, Ohio fourth-graders outperformed the nation as a whole by scoring four points above the national rate of 30 percent proficient and above.

Figure 2.36

Ohio Grade 4 Reading Percent Proficient or Above on NAEP - Disaggregated Groups, 2003

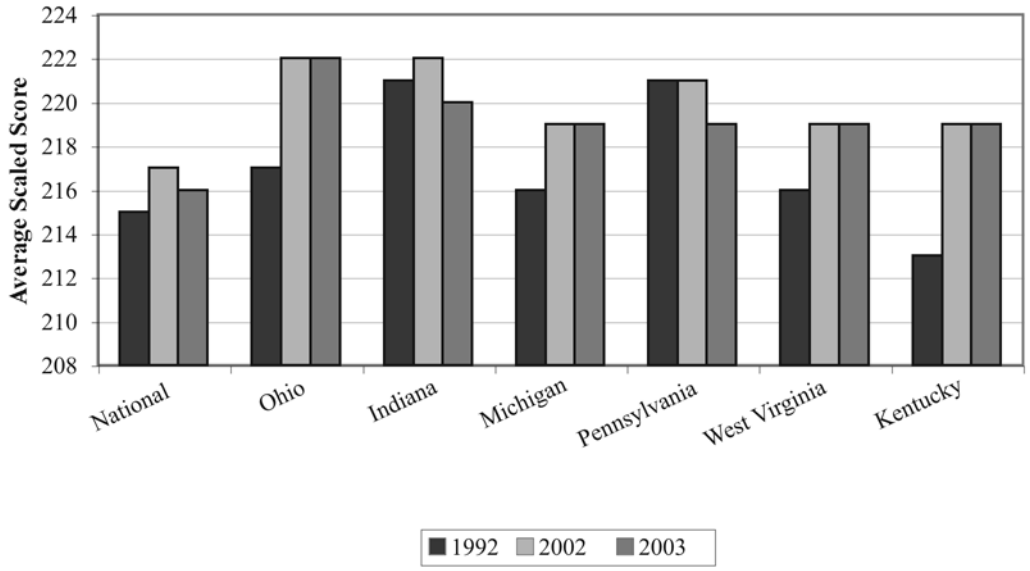


Note: Data are from NAEP.

While the reading scores for Ohio's fourth-graders have improved, significant achievement gaps remain (Figure 2.36). The 2003 administration of NAEP shows that 22 percentage points more White students scored proficient or above than Black students, and 15 percentage points more White students scored proficient or above than Hispanic students. There was a 25 percentage point gap between the proportion of economically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged fourth-graders who scored proficient or above on the reading test in 2003.

Figure 2.37

Grade 4 Reading Average Scaled Scores
Ohio vs. Nation and Surrounding States, 1992-2003

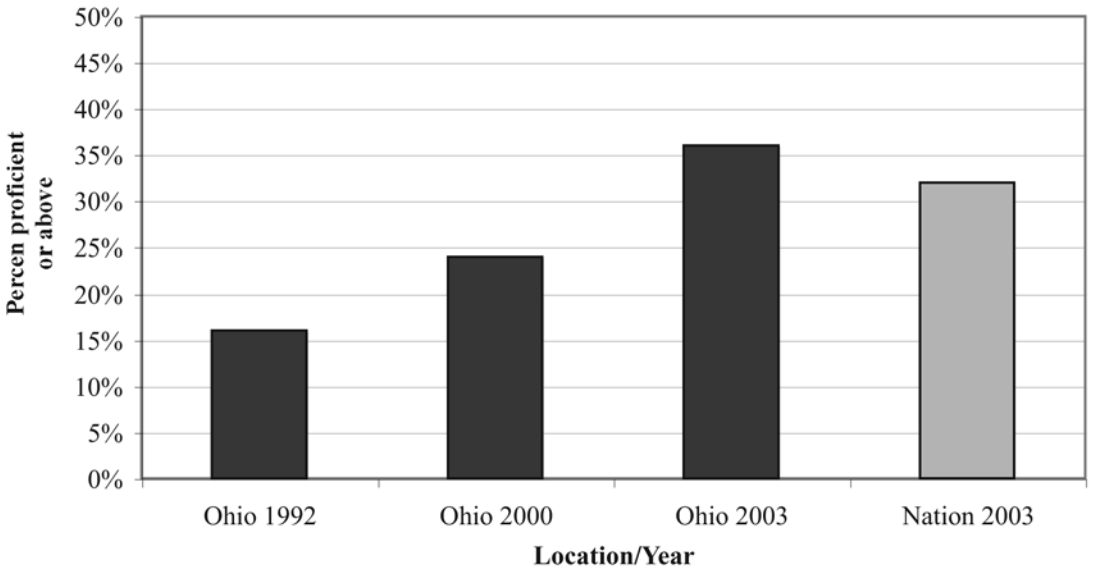


Note: Data are from NAEP.

In addition to performance levels, NAEP reports scaled scores to reflect the number of points achieved. Many testing programs, including the ACT and SAT I, report results according to the number of scaled score points earned. The Ohio average scaled score on the fourth-grade NAEP reading test improved by five points between 1992 and 2003 (Figure 2.37). Ohio students outperformed all of the surrounding states and the nation as a whole in the most recent administration of NAEP.

Figure 2.38

Ohio and National Grade 4 Mathematics
Percent Proficient or Above on NAEP, 1992-2003

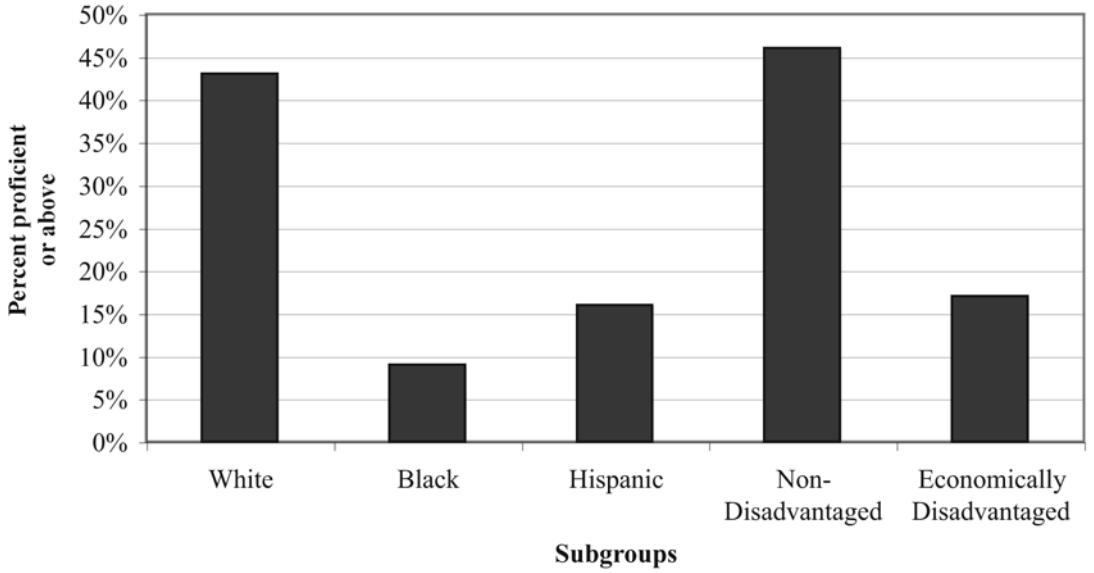


Note: Data are from NAEP.

Ohio fourth-graders outperformed the national average by 4 percentage points on the 2003 NAEP mathematics test (Figure 2.38). In addition, the proportion of Ohio fourth-graders scoring proficient or higher increased by 12 points between 1992 and 2003.

Figure 2.39

Ohio Grade 4 Mathematics Percent Proficient or Above on NAEP - Disaggregated Groups, 2003

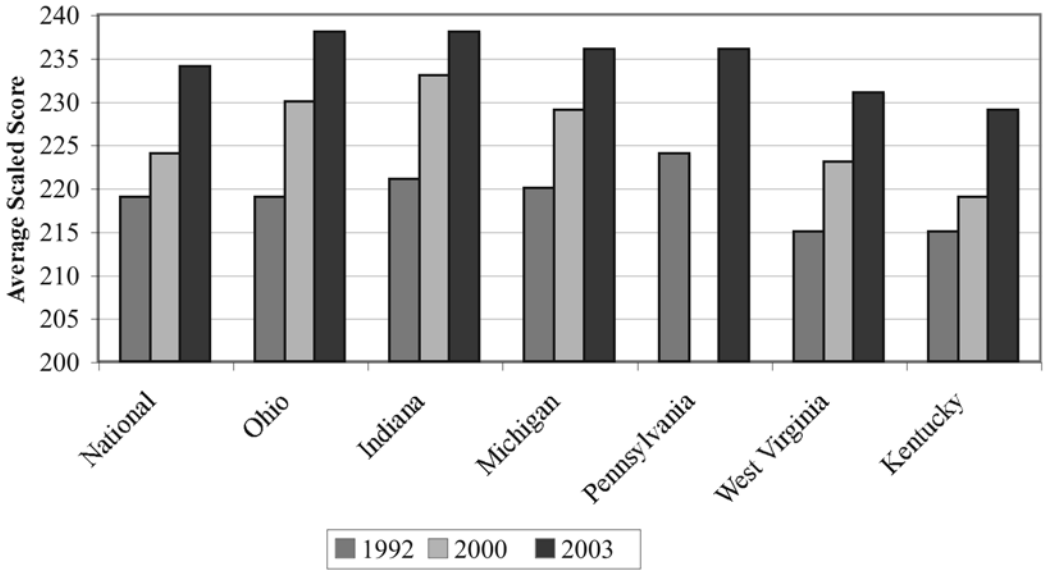


Note: Data are from NAEP.

While overall fourth-grade performance on NAEP has improved in recent years, gaps in achievement remain. Figure 2.39 demonstrates that the percent of White fourth-grade students performing at the proficient level or higher in 2003 was almost 34 points higher than their Black counterparts. Almost 30 percent fewer economically disadvantaged students scored at the proficient level or higher compared to nondisadvantaged students.

Figure 2.40

Grade 4 Mathematics Average Scaled Scores
Ohio vs. Nation and Surrounding States, 1992-2003

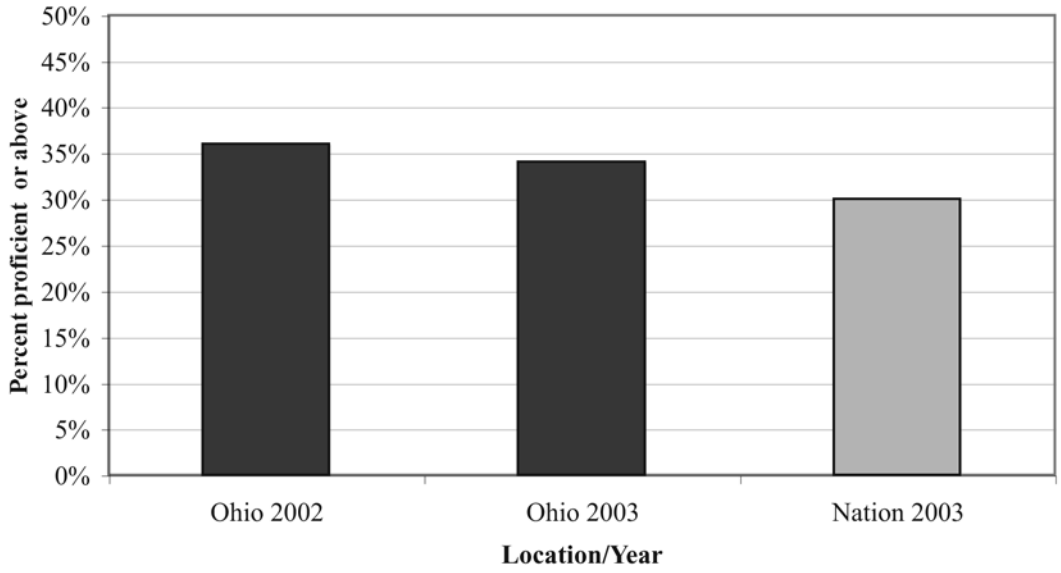


Note: Data are from NAEP.

Ohio's average scaled scores on the fourth-grade NAEP mathematics test have increased by 19 points from 1992 to 2003. In the most recent test administration, Ohio's fourth-graders achieved a higher average scaled score in mathematics than fourth-graders nationally and in surrounding states, except Indiana, which tied Ohio.

Figure 2.41

Ohio and National Grade 8 Reading
Percent Proficient or Above on NAEP, 2002 and 2003

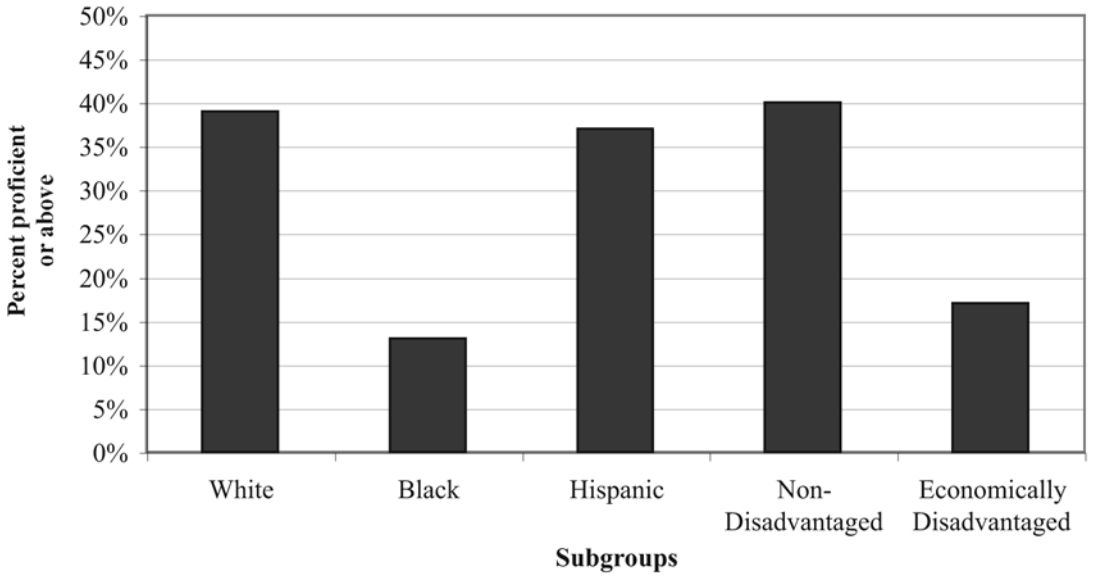


Note: Data are from NAEP.

Figure 2.41 shows the performance of Ohio eighth-graders on the NAEP reading test for the past two years. The percent of students scoring at the proficient or above level in 2003 (34 percent) is higher than the national percentage (30 percent).

Figure 2.42

Ohio Grade 8 Reading Percent Proficient or Above on NAEP - Disaggregated Groups, 2003

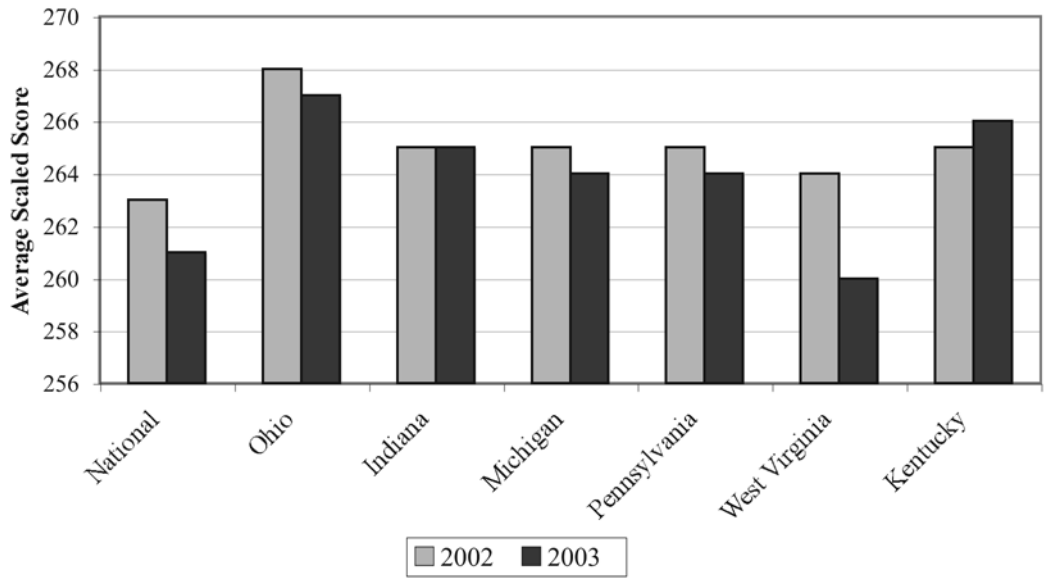


Note: Data are from NAEP.

The 2003 NAEP reading scores for eighth-graders varied by demographic group, as demonstrated in Figure 2.42. Only 13 percent of Black students scored at the proficient level compared to 39 percent of White students. There was a 23 percentage point gap between economically disadvantaged students scoring at the proficient level compared to non-disadvantaged students.

Figure 2.43

Grade 8 Reading Average Scaled Scores
Ohio vs. Nation and Surrounding States, 2002 and 2003

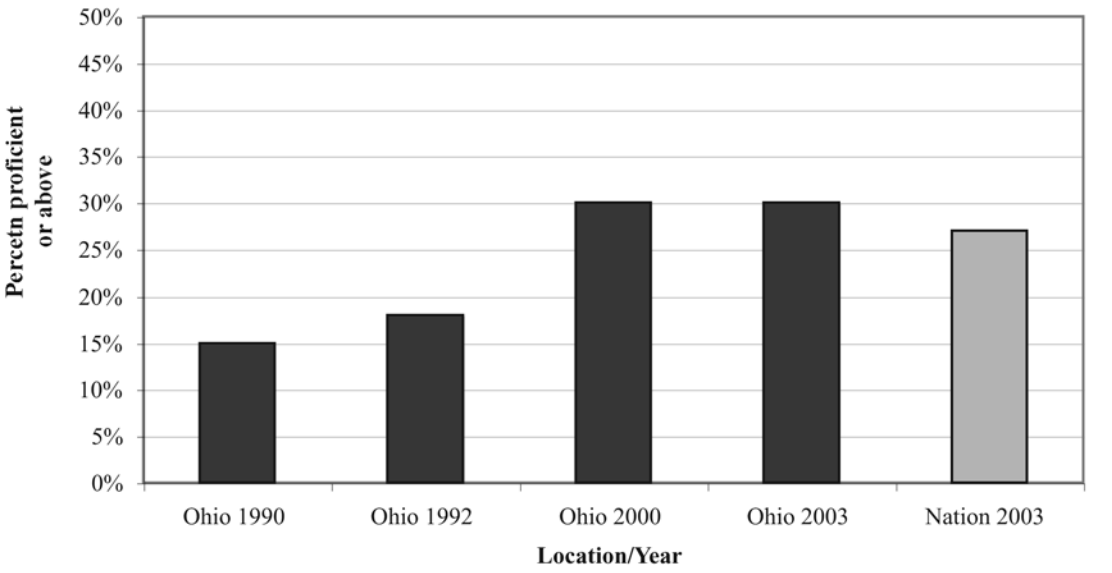


Note: Data are from NAEP.

The average scaled score on the NAEP eighth-grade reading test declined slightly between 2002 and 2003 for Ohio students as well as the nation overall (Figure 2.43). In all of the states surrounding Ohio (except Kentucky), average scaled scores were lower in 2003 than in 2002. Despite the slight dip in scores, Ohio eighth-graders outperformed their counterparts in surrounding states and nationally.

Figure 2.44

Ohio and National Grade 8 Mathematics
Percent Proficient or Above on NAEP, 1990-2003

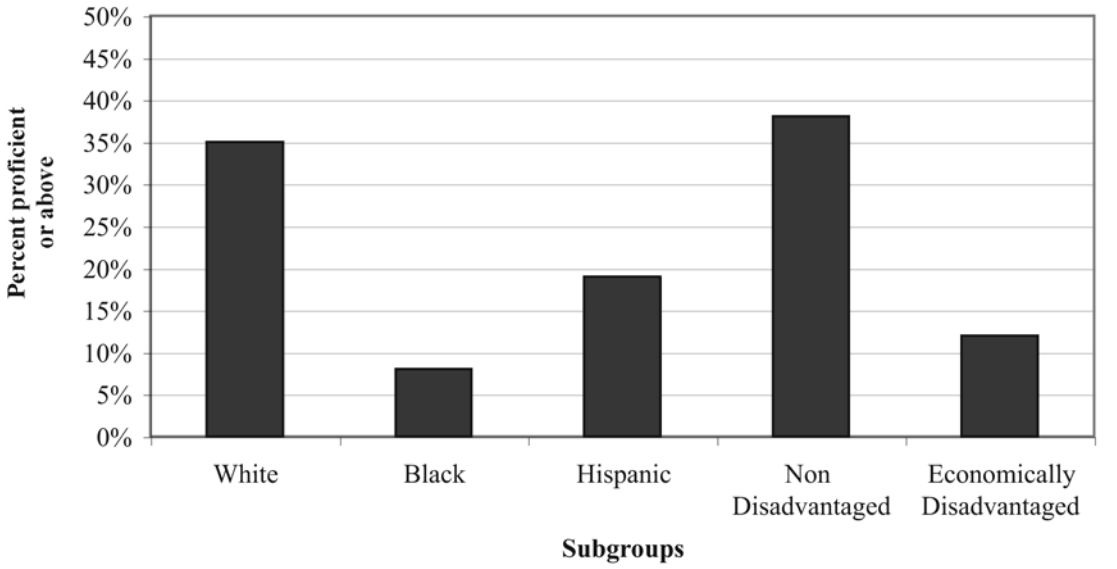


Note: Data are from NAEP.

In the past decade, Ohio has increased the percent of eighth-graders scoring proficient or above by about 15 percentage points on the NAEP mathematics test. Figure 2.44 shows that students in Ohio outperformed eighth-graders nationally in the most recent NAEP administration.

Figure 2.45

Ohio Grade 8 Mathematics Percent Proficient or Above on NAEP - Disaggregated Groups, 2003

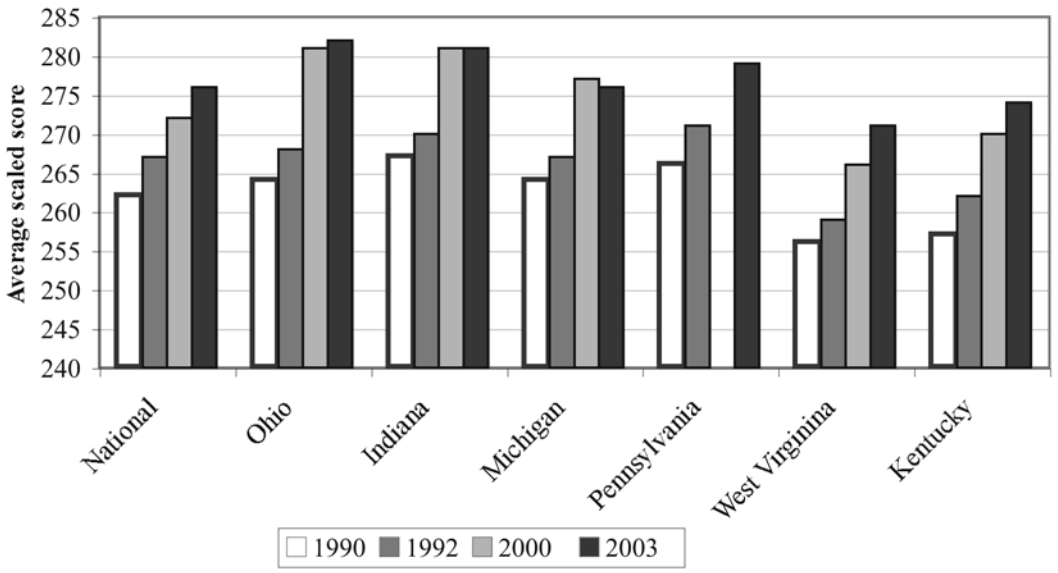


Note: Data are from NAEP.

The gap in the proportion of White and Black students scoring proficient or higher was 27 points (35 percent versus 8 percent). In addition, 12 percent of economically disadvantaged students scored at least proficient while 38 percent of nondisadvantaged students scored at least proficient in 2003.

Figure 2.46

Grade 8 Mathematics Average Scaled Scores
Ohio vs. Nation and Surrounding States, 1990-2003



Note: Data are from NAEP.

Ohio's average scaled score on the eighth-grade mathematics NAEP test has increased by 18 points during the last decade. The average score of Ohio's students was higher than the scores for eighth-graders in surrounding states (Figure 2.46). In addition, Ohio's students scored six points higher than the national average in the most recent NAEP administration.

Section 3: Are Ohio's Students Ready for College?

While assessments are an important tool to ensure students are learning at grade-level expectations, test scores are only one important school outcome. At the end of their high school careers, Ohio's students should have the academic knowledge that will allow them a range of options for their futures. Section 3 examines how prepared Ohio's students are for the transition to higher education, the graduation rate, remediation rates at Ohio institutions of higher education and student performance on national assessments that measure college readiness. The section also examines the status of those students who will move immediately into the workforce or use postsecondary education to enhance workforce skills for specific job placement.

Ohio has experienced gains in the number of students taking more rigorous coursework. Since 2000, the number of Advanced Placement tests taken in Ohio has increased by 28 percent from approximately 27,000 to more than 37,000 tests, while the average score has remained steady at more than three points (or passing). Overall, Ohio's students score above the national average in both the verbal and mathematics portions of the ACT and SAT I.

Although Ohio's graduation rate has increased since 1995-96 to a current level of almost 85 percent, too many students are still not graduating. Black and Hispanic students are graduating at much lower rates than White and Asian students.

Data indicate that the curriculum taken in high school makes a significant difference in how well students are prepared for college. College remediation rates for students who take the more rigorous curriculum (complete core) are 19 percentage points lower than those who take a minimum core curriculum.

How Well are High Schools Preparing Students for College?

Many of the techniques that make for effective teaching and learning environments in the younger grades also apply to high school students. High schools have the added challenge of offering demanding courses to mature students who are more diverse in their interests and more concerned about their immediate futures than most young students. Offering a challenging curriculum and opportunities to take courses in college environments are some of the ways in which high schools can help students make informed decisions about their futures. Advanced Placement (AP) courses and the Postsecondary Education Option Program offer students two paths to explore college courses.

Advanced Placement Course Taking

The AP program is a cooperative educational endeavor between secondary schools and colleges and universities. It allows high school students to take college-level academic coursework and demonstrate mastery of the advanced material by taking a national AP Exam. Students can receive credit and/or advanced placement from thousands of colleges and universities that participate in the AP program.

AP courses make substantial academic demands on students. The tests cover 19 general subjects, with 20 subject courses being a full year in length and 10 courses lasting a half year. Students are required to do considerable outside reading and other assignments to demonstrate the analytical skills and writing abilities expected of first-year students in a strong college program. This experience helps students develop the intellectual skills and self-discipline they will need in college.

In addition, AP courses benefit the high schools themselves. AP offers high schools the opportunity to:

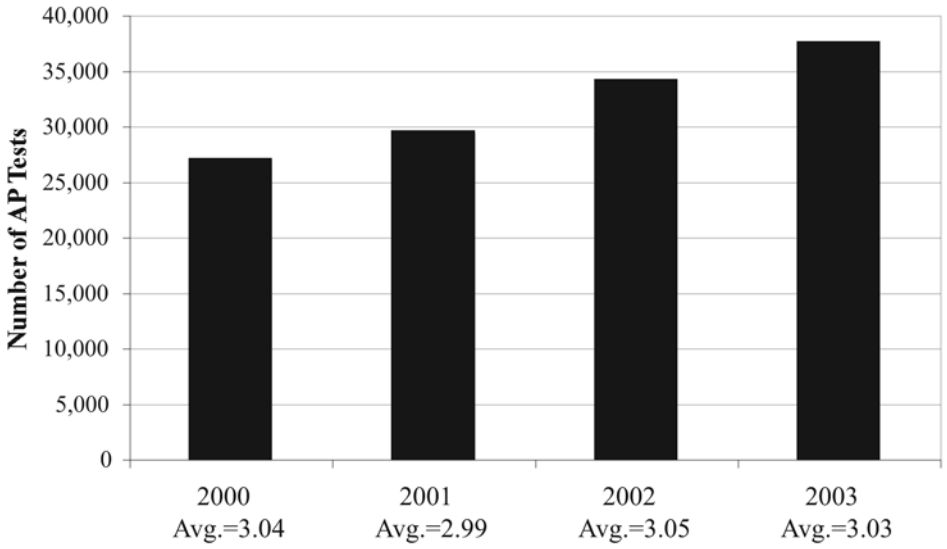
- Motivate their students to study hard;
- Enhance the quality of the curriculum offered;
- Allow faculty to teach demanding courses to capable, highly motivated students;
- Demonstrate to the community the school's commitment to strong academic standards; and
- Allow students to take college level courses in areas that interest them.

The AP grading scale ranges from one to five and indicates the qualifications that the student would bring to a college level course in that subject. Five indicates that the student is extremely well qualified, three indicates that the student is qualified, and one indicates that the student will receive no recommendation for that subject area. A score of three is equivalent to passing. Universities and colleges generally give course credit to those students who score three or above, depending on the subject and course. However, a score of five is increasingly becoming the standard for credit in some areas and for some subjects. Further information about the AP credit policies of colleges and universities can be found on the College Board Web site (http://www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy/).

From 2000 to 2003, Ohio's students taking the AP exams have scored an average of more than three points (out of five). Figure 3.1 shows the number of tests taken has increased.

Figure 3.1

Number of AP Tests Taken in Ohio by Public School Students, 2000-2003



Note: Data are from the Curriculum and Assessment Office, ODE.

In 2003-04, 2,508 separate AP courses were offered in Ohio through high schools and postsecondary options, with a total enrollment of 79,324. This enrollment number does not reflect the total number of students who took AP courses since some students took AP courses in more than one subject.

Advanced Placement Incentive Program Grant

ODE has received a federal grant to increase the number of AP programs and the number of low-income and minority students who participate in AP programs. In addition to the available fee waiver program, five major goals have been established: to develop and implement an AP awareness program; to develop a distance AP education program where students can take online courses and access information to increase their probability of success on AP tests; to develop and implement a comprehensive system of professional development activities for current AP teachers; to implement a training program for parents of under-represented students; and to evaluate all project activities and program impact.

The AP program's goal is to raise standards for the education and performance of all students and to close the gaps that exist between different populations of students. By focusing on involving more students across Ohio in AP courses, particularly those from low-income and traditionally under-represented populations, the program will help establish and maintain higher performance standards. In addition, the project is designed to allow for more inclusive strategies that will dispel the assumption that AP is only for gifted students.

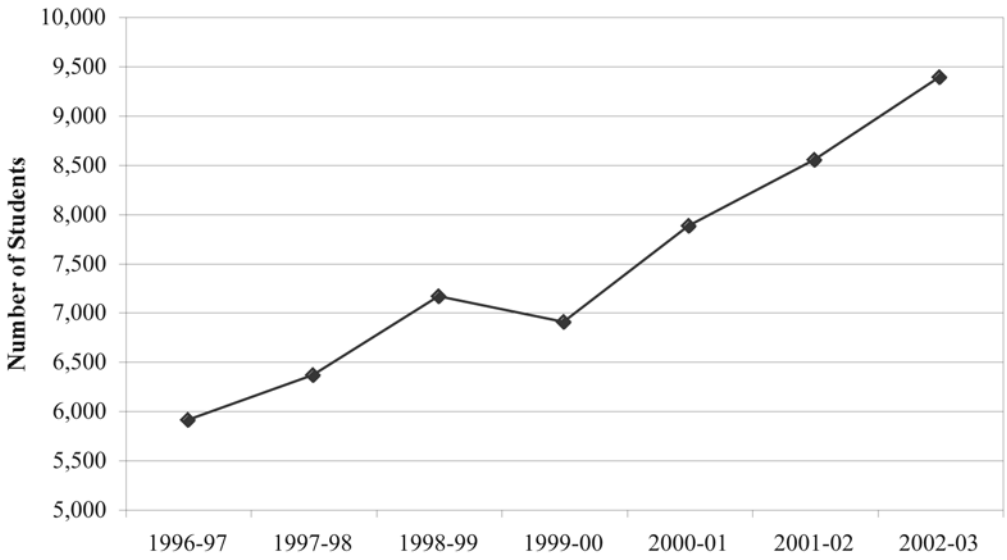
Are there other options for taking college-level classes?

In addition to taking AP courses embedded within their usual school programs, high school students also have the opportunity to enroll in eligible postsecondary schools to receive either college or high school course credit. The Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program permits high school students in ninth- through 12th-grades to earn college and high school graduation credit through the successful completion of college courses. The program provides expanded opportunities for appropriately qualified high school students to experience coursework at the college or university level. Any high school student admitted to a course by an institution of higher education will be expected and required to perform at the same level as the institution's regular students. At the same time, high schools continue to be responsible for providing a comprehensive and challenging college preparatory curriculum, including Advanced Placement and other advanced level courses, for their students.

Figure 3.2 shows that Ohio students are increasingly taking advantage of this opportunity.

Figure 3.2

Number of Ohio Public School Students Participating in the Postsecondary Option Program, 1997-2003



Note: Data are from ODE at http://www.ode.state.oh.us/school_finance/handbooks/finance_handbooks/PSEOP/default.asp.

Are Ohio's Students Graduating from High School?

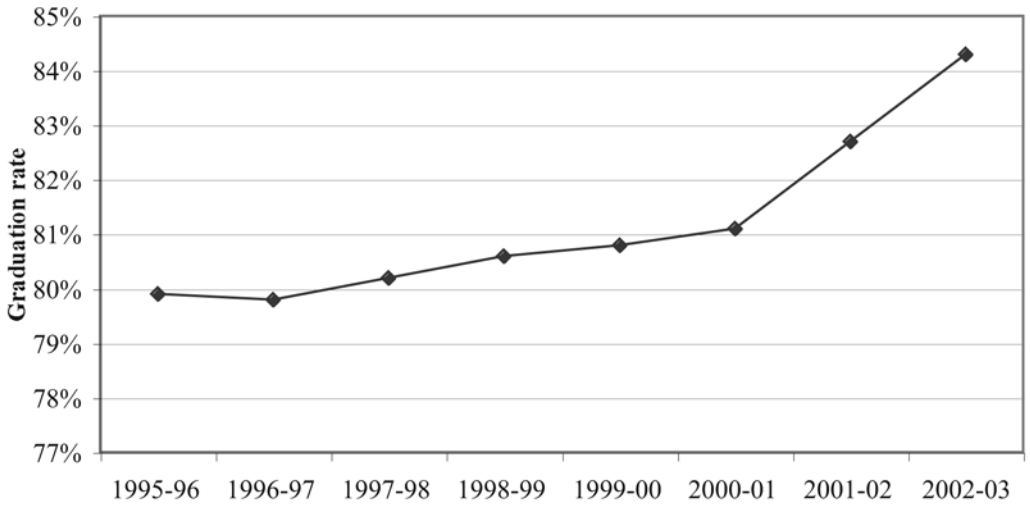
Along with attendance rate, graduation rates are a strong indicator of the health of Ohio's school environments. The same safe and collegial atmospheres that allow younger students to maximize their learning time also help older students persist through high school.

The calculation of graduation rates has varied significantly across the country and throughout time. Ideally, graduation rates would measure cohort level, four-year (on-time) graduation as recommended by the National Center of Education Statistics (2004). Ohio's graduation rate is only an estimate of four-year, on-time graduation for the cohort of students who were first-time ninth-graders four years earlier, not an exact calculation. Students who remain enrolled in high school beyond their fourth year are removed from the cohort with whom they started high school and added to a later cohort. Ohio hopes to transition to a true cohort graduation rate soon to gain a more accurate picture of what is happening to Ohio high school students.

Ohio's graduation rate has been improving since the mid-1990s, reaching 84 percent in 2002-03, the last year for which full data is available (Figure 3.3). It is important to remember that students who earn a GED are not included as graduates. Overall, the graduation rate reveals that almost one of every six Ohio students does not earn a high school diploma.

Figure 3.3

Ohio's High School Graduation Rate, 1996-2003

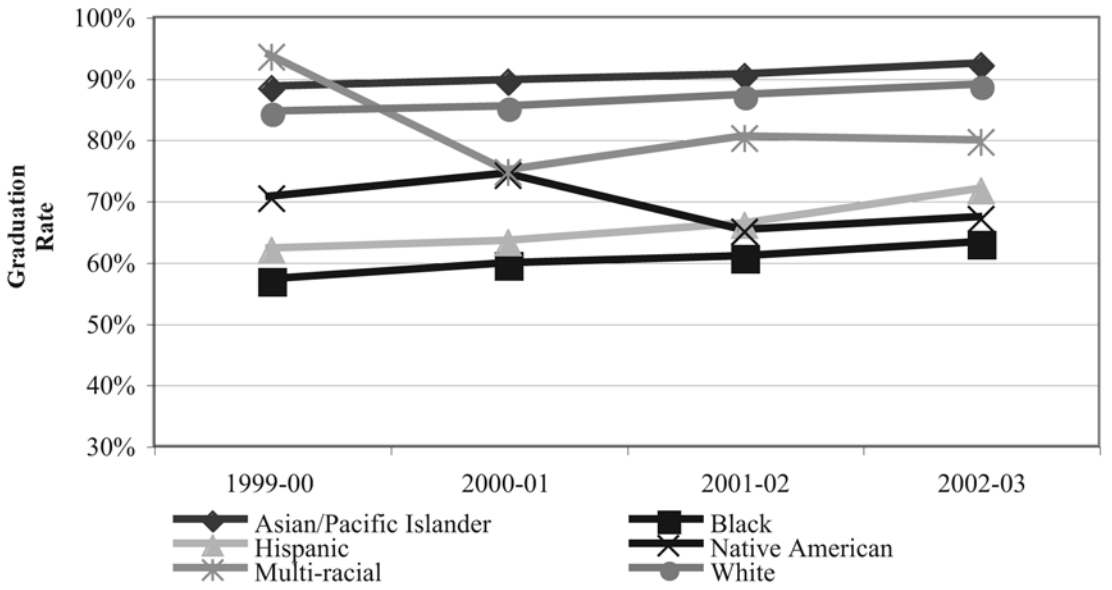


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

The graduation rate by race/ethnicity is shown for the classes of 2001 through 2004 in Figure 3.4. Asian and White students had the highest graduation rates in these years. The graduation rate is steadily increasing for most ethnic groups, with an average increase of 6 percentage points over the 2000-2001 rate. The sole exception is the Native American subgroup whose small size makes for unstable trend data. The gap in graduation rates between ethnic groups is substantial despite overall increases.

Figure 3.4

Graduation Rate by Race/Ethnicity, 2002-2003

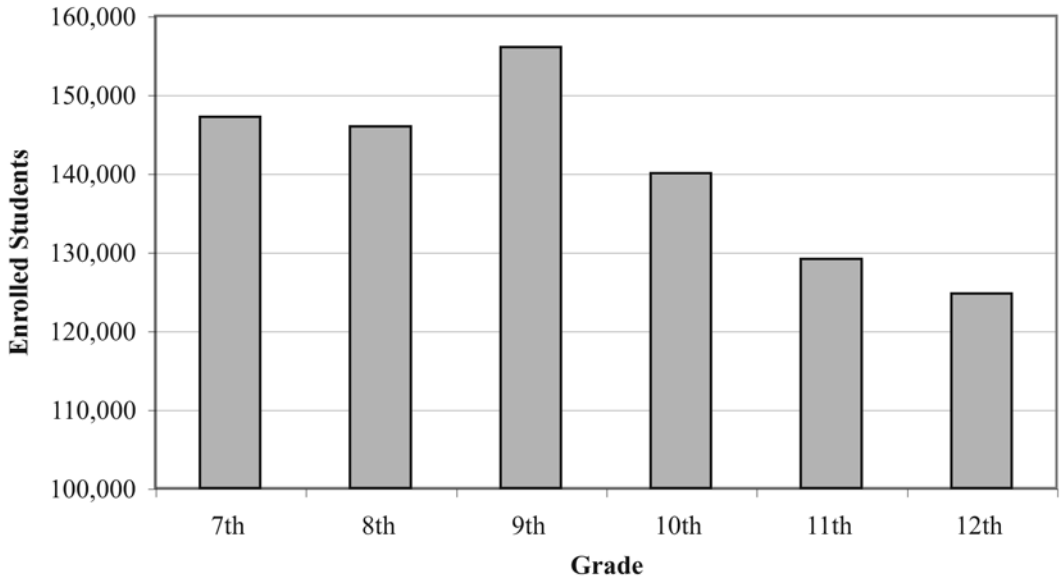


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

One key to understanding Ohio's graduation rate is embedded in enrollment patterns from one grade to another for a given school year. Figure 3.5 illustrates enrollment for the 2003-04 school year, which is consistent with the pattern for previous years. The peak in ninth-grade enrollment likely reflects the large number of students leaving middle schools not ready for high school-level work and high schools that may not be successful at providing instructional environments that engage and support students. As a result, many first-time ninth graders (and also a number of second- and third-year ninth graders) do not earn sufficient credits to achieve 10th-grade status. In their second or third year of enrollment in high school, they remain in ninth grade as a result of their limited credits, causing an enrollment bulge in the ninth grade and subsequent lower enrollments in 10th- through 12th-grades. While some second- and third-year ninth graders do go on to graduate, the majority do not successfully complete high school.

Figure 3.5

Ohio Public School Students Enrolled in 7th-12th Grades, 2004



Note: Data are the year-end average daily membership (ADM) for all public districts, including community schools, in Ohio. This calculation will differ from the figures presented in Table 1.1.

Are Ohio students prepared for college?

The text and Table 3.6 are taken from the Ohio Board of Regents annual report on students transitioning to college entitled *Making the Transition from High School to College in Ohio 2004* (www.regents.state.oh.us/perfrpt/2004HSindex.html). One of the findings is that 71 percent of college freshmen have had at least a minimum preparation (minimum core) for college while in high school, consisting of four English courses and three courses each in mathematics, science and social studies. Only 24 percent of college freshman have gone further to take a more rigorous curriculum (complete core) consisting of four courses each in English, mathematics and social studies, and three courses in science that include biology, chemistry and physics.

Table 3.6

Ohio Student Experiences and Outcomes by Level of High School Academic Preparation, 2002

Type of Academic Curriculum Completed in High School	Number of First-Year Ohio College Students, Fall 2002	Percent Taking an Advanced Placement Test in High School	Percent Taking College Courses in High School	Average Entrance Exam Score (ACT Scale)	Average First Term GPA (public colleges only)	Percent of Public College Students Taking Remedial Courses
Complete Core	12,398	28%	10%	24	3	13%
Minimum Core	23,466	12%	7%	22	2.8	32%
Less than Minimum Core	14,778	4%	5%	19	2.5	53%
High School Curriculum Unknown	9,945	3%	4%	NA	2.3	61%
TOTAL	60,587	12%	7%	22	2.7	40%

Notes: Data are Ohio recent high school graduates enrolled as first-time college freshmen in Ohio, fall 2002. Table is edited for space. The full table is available at: www.regents.state.oh.us/perfrpt/2004HSindex.html.

Students who take a more rigorous college-preparatory curriculum are better prepared for college and have better college outcomes than their peers who take less rigorous courses.

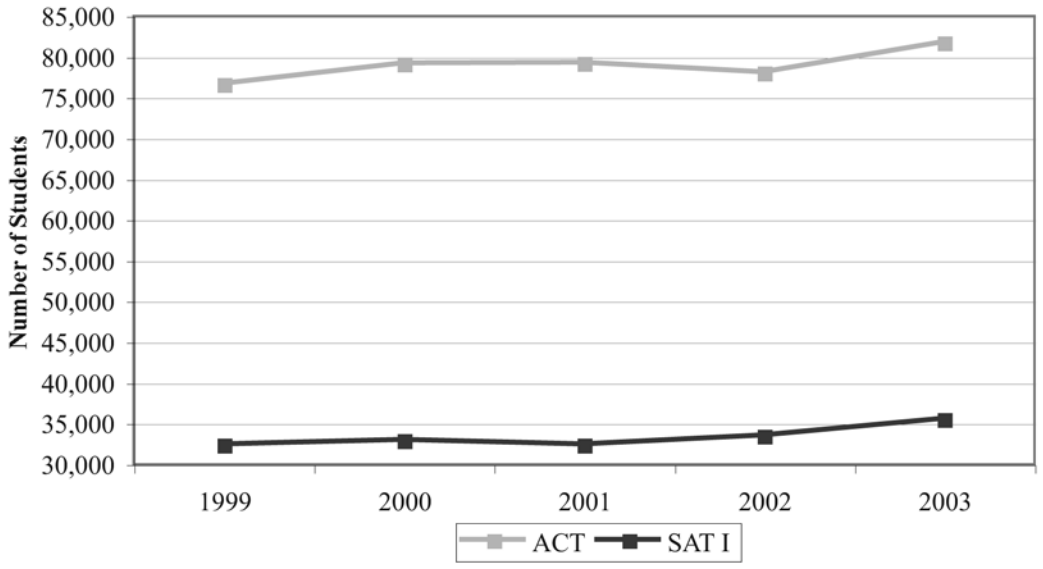
The largest preparation-related differences in college outcomes occur in college freshman-year remediation rates. Students who took a complete core curriculum (four years each of English, mathematics and social studies, and at least three years of science courses that include biology, chemistry, and physics) had a 13 percent remediation rate, compared to 32 percent for students who took only a minimum core curriculum (four years of English and three years each of mathematics, science and social studies) and 53 percent for students who did not take a core curriculum. Students for whom no high school course-taking information is available (primarily students who did not take either the ACT or SAT I college entrance exams) had a 61 percent remediation rate.

Tests of Preparedness

Ohio's students have the choice of participating in the ACT, SAT I or both exams to meet the requirements for admission to most four-year colleges and universities. In Ohio, approximately 50,000 more students take ACT than SAT I exams (Figure 3.7). This figure has remained consistent despite increased overall participation in both exams. According to data from ACT, in 2003, 66 percent of Ohio's graduating seniors and 29 percent of Ohio's juniors participated in the ACT. The other 5 percent of participants were either sophomores or reported no grade.

Figure 3.7

Ohio Participation in ACT and SAT 1, 1999-2003

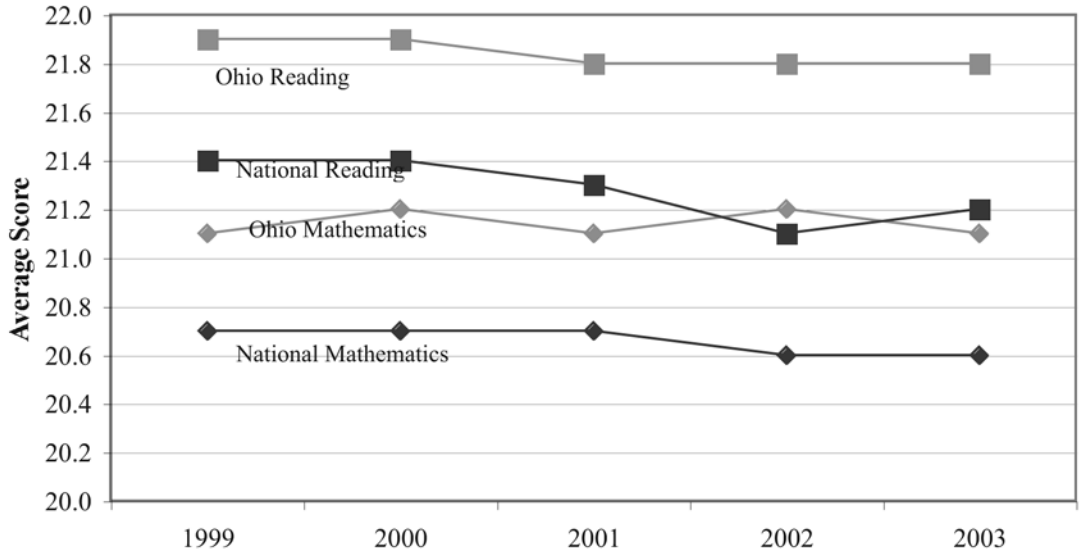


Note: Data are from Ohio Board of Regents.

Ohio students have consistently performed above the national average on both the ACT and SAT I exams in all subject areas (Figures 3.8 and 3.9).

Figure 3.8

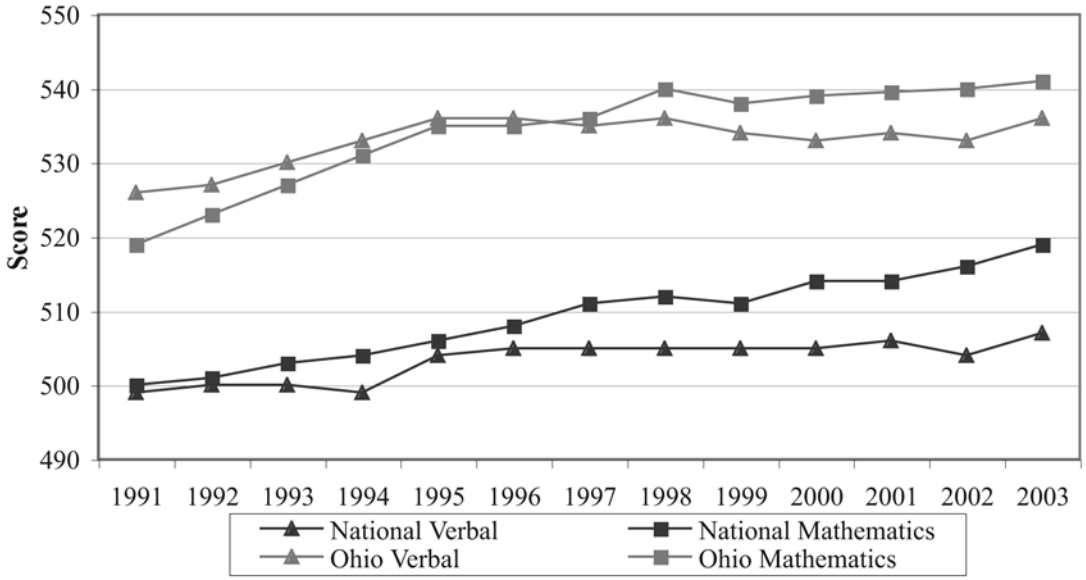
Ohio and National Average ACT Scores, 1999-2003



Note: Data are from ACT.

Figure 3.9

Ohio and National SAT 1 Scores, 1991-2003



Note: Data are from the College Board. All scores are "recentered scores" recalculated in 1995.

How Are Students Being Prepared for Future Careers?

Many of Ohio's students have used their high school experience to provide more directed job placement opportunities. Increasingly, this path leads to postsecondary education before employment, but many programs also lead to employment directly after high school.

Ohio's secondary education related to career-technical training is organized through 92 Career-Technical Planning districts made up of 49 Joint Vocational School Districts and 43 Comprehensive/Compact School districts. The basic purpose of preparing individuals for productive careers – while providing business and industry with a skilled, quality workforce – has guided today's Career-Technical and Adult Education system to continually respond to the changing world.

Ohio's high-quality programs fulfill the promise that adult and youth will be prepared to face the future. Of the 550,858 Ohio high school students, 119,598 are enrolled in workforce development education – a curriculum that combines strong academics and concentrated technical content in a specific career field to prepare students for college and careers. Newer career-technical programs with rigorous content and strong postsecondary partners are available in the areas of teaching, engineering, biotechnology and public safety. Of the nearly 120,000 high school students in career-technical classes and programs, 76,343 are juniors and seniors, of whom 13,124 are enrolled in College Tech Prep programs.

In 2003-2004 High School Career-Technical performance included a 94.6 percent proficiency test passage rate, a 92.2 percent post-program placement rate and a 49.1 percent continuing education enrollment rate for workforce development students. The results of the most recent Secondary Workforce Development Performance Report show that Ohio has met six of 17 state and federal performance standards and made improvements in five of the remaining 11. Among the achievements is the high positive post-program success rate, especially for employment and postsecondary enrollment related outcomes (66.1 percent in related employment and educational experiences, 91.5 percent in civilian employment, and 57.4 percent in other employment related outcomes). Table 3.10 shows all 17 performance measures and Ohio's results for the last three years.

Table 3.10

Ohio Secondary Workforce Development Measures – 2002-2004

Performance Measures	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY2004 USDE Performance Levels/HPTs[1]	FY2004 Targets Met?
High School Graduation Academic Achievement Standard[2]	**95.3%**	**95.8%**	**94.6%**	**95.0%**	**NO**
Post-Program Placement:					
A. Positive Post-Program Placement[2]	**92.5%**	**92.4%**	**92.2%**	**92.4%**	**NO**
B. Higher Education Enrollment	44.2%	46.9%	49.1%	40.0%	YES
C. Related Employment & Educational Experiences	67.7%	67.7%	66.1%	70.0%	NO
D. Civilian Employment	92.4%	91.8%	91.5%	90.0%	YES
E. Related Employment	61.7%	60.0%	57.4%	60.0%	NO
F. Status Known	91.2%	92.9%	92.6%	90.0%	YES
OCTCA[3] Assessment Results[2]	**60.9%**	**57.3%**	**59.2%**	**53.0%**	**YES**
High School Diploma Attainment Rate[2]	**95.2%**	**94.9%**	**96.3%**	**92.0%**	**YES**
Participation in Non-traditional programs[2]	**26.3%**	**26.2%**	**26.4%**	**26.0%**	**YES**
Completion of Non-traditional Programs[2]	**23.6%**	**22.1%**	**22.5%**	**23.0%**	**NO**
Market Share:					
A. 11 – 12 Grades	26.5%	26.9%	27.3%	40.0%	NO
B. 9 – 10 Grades	10.8%	12.2%	13.3%	40.0%	NO
CTSO[4] Participation Rate	58.7%	58.3%	58.3%	95.0%	NO
Career-Technical Career Passport Rate	83.1%	90.0%	86.0%	100%	NO
Student Attendance	91.8%	92.5%	93.0%	95.0%	NO
Staff Attendance	95.6%	96.0%	95.9%	97.0%	NO

1. HPTs – High Performance Targets
2. This is the FY2004 Federal Performance Level
3. OCTCA – Ohio Career-Technical Competency Assessment
4. CTSO – Career-Technical Student Organization

BOLD – Federal performance measures. All others are state performance measures.

SOURCE – Office of Career Technical and Adult Education

To improve the success of career-technical programs, the State Board of Education's *Task Force on Quality High Schools for a Lifetime of Opportunities* recommended that Ohio support the creation of more personalized learning environments in high schools and improve the conditions of learning for every student. This can be achieved by creating smaller learning communities, more applied learning opportunities and greater community engagement. Recommendations of the report include:

- Continuing development of small learning communities. Across Ohio, nearly every major urban school district has engaged its students, families, community leaders, unions and educators in transforming their high schools into autonomous small learning communities. Much of this work is being done through the Ohio High School Transformation Initiative, a partnership among the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ohio Department of Education;
- Promoting applied learning opportunities;
- Focusing on professional development;
- Assisting with community engagement strategies.

Section 4: How is Ohio Supporting Improvement in Teaching and Learning?

Ohio's public schools and school districts are involved in many important efforts to improve academic achievement. The State Board of Education and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) seek to add value in a manner that provides support, leadership and guidance to local efforts. Specifically, Ohio is pursuing the following overarching strategies:

- Implement a fair and credible assessment and accountability system that motivates improvements in teaching and learning for all groups of children in Ohio, and promotes the constructive use of data to inform instructional decisions;
- Support educators in developing curricula that teach Ohio's academic content standards in ways that result in strong achievement for all groups of students in every school;
- Ensure that educator preparation programs and professional development programs prepare educators to teach Ohio's academic content standards well so that every student has high-quality, highly qualified teachers;
- Support efforts to make school environments safer, healthier and more conducive to academic learning;
- Ensure school financial resources are used in a fiscally responsible manner and support school districts in making decisions that result in the efficient and effective pursuit of strong academic results;
- Ensure schools and districts in need of improvement have effective support and technical assistance that build their capacity to make substantial improvements in student achievement.

This section explores each of these major strategies and considers the challenges that need to be addressed to help Ohio's schools and districts generate better achievement results for all students.

Is the State Accountability System Fair and Credible?

The primary purpose of the state accountability system is not to judge schools, but to signal to schools the need to improve the academic achievement of their students. The current school accountability system was enacted by the legislature in 2003 and brought Ohio into compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The intent of the federal and state legislation is to provide each child with the opportunity to obtain a high-quality education through standards-based reform. Immediately following enactment of NCLB, Ohio sought to adopt a state accountability model that ensures schools are continually improving the academic achievement of all students. During this process, input was sought at more than 70 meetings and focus groups involving school leaders, educators and business leaders. The state also worked with the U.S. Department of Education to ensure that the plan met federal guidelines.

Several principles guided the development of the accountability system (Porter and Chester, 2002):

- The assessment and accountability program should provide good targets for student and school efforts. If assessment and accountability can focus effort, then they must focus effort in constructive directions;
- The assessment and accountability program should be aligned and symmetrical. To produce high levels of student achievement, students and schools must work together. No school can be successful without students who are motivated and ready to learn. The assessment and accountability program should include stakes that schools and students share so that both have incentives to improve student achievement;
- The assessment and accountability system should be fair. For students, fairness requires that schools provide an adequate opportunity to learn. For schools, fairness requires access to the resources needed to be successful. A fair assessment and accountability program also must include tests that are reliable and valid for the ways in which they are used.

Beginning with the 2002-03 school year, Local Report Card designations for districts and schools are determined by measuring the proportion of students reaching proficient or higher levels on statewide assessments (performance indicators), the performance index score, improvement in the performance index score, participation rates in statewide tests, and attendance and graduation rates. The federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement, which examines aggregate and disaggregate (racial/ethnic, students with disabilities, limited English proficient students, economically disadvantaged) performance in reading and mathematics, also is used to determine designations. The designations are Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch and Academic Emergency.

Each indicator is earned by meeting or exceeding the goals set by the State Board of Education. For example, at least 75 percent of students must reach the proficient level on each statewide assessment to meet state goals. The performance index score is created by combining the percentage of students at each performance level, from below basic to advanced, and awarding more credit to higher achievement. The performance index score addresses concerns from the field that (1) since 75 percent of students must be proficient or above before a school or district earns an indicator, the indicators are not sufficiently sensitive to incremental improvements in achievement, and (2) since the indicators look solely at the proportion of students who are proficient or above, they result in disproportionate resources going to students who are "on the bubble," who are those students who educators perceive as having the best chance of passing the tests. The performance index is intended to reward educators for their efforts to improve the achievement of students at all levels.

The current report card indicators and the performance index score are combined in a way that stronger performance on one measure can offset weaker performance on the other. AYP is a delimiter – it places a ceiling on the rating a school or district can earn if it misses AYP, and a floor on the rating earned if it meets the AYP criteria. Districts and schools cannot earn the Excellent or Effective rating if they miss AYP for three or more years, while consistent performance across all subgroups by meeting AYP will earn at least a Continuous Improvement designation. Schools and districts will move from Academic Emergency to Academic Watch or from Academic Watch to Continuous Improvement if they have demonstrated strong improvement over two years – at least a 10-point gain in their performance index scores.

By combining the measures in this manner, the accountability system provides multiple lenses for examining school and district effectiveness. Documentation of effectiveness through either the current report card indicators or the performance index will lead to higher designations and motivate schools and districts to increase student achievement. Strong improvement is rewarded. AYP introduces the importance of student group performance into the system while providing a safety net for districts that were previously highly ranked but subsequently demonstrate low performance with one or more student groups.

Is the State Accountability System Motivating Better Student Results?

Improving statewide achievement is mirrored in the past two years by improving district and school performance. It appears that the state accountability system is promoting improved student results. For example, more than six of seven Ohio school districts (86.5 percent) and almost four of five schools (79.0 percent) achieved gains in their performance index scores in 2003-04 compared to the previous year.

Table 4.1

Ohio District and School Designations, 2003 and 2004

	Districts		Schools	
Designations	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
Excellent	85	117	630	920
Effective	177	229	771	906
Continuous Improvement	278	224	1,242	1,211
Academic Watch	52	34	237	125
Academic Emergency	16	4	338	222

Note: Data are from Ohio Local Report Cards.

Table 4.1 displays the number of districts and schools earning each designation in each of the past two years (2002-03 and 2003-04). The percentage of districts in the top two designations (Excellent and Effective) increased from 44 percent in 2002-03 to 57 percent in 2003-04, while the number of districts in Academic Emergency or Academic Watch declined from 68 to 38 percent. Fifty-four percent (1,826) of Ohio's schools received either an Excellent or Effective rating compared to 44 percent that earned either of the top two ratings in 2002-03.

Are All Schools and Districts Experiencing High Achievement for All Students?

Table 4.2 shows the number of districts in each report card designation and if they met AYP for the 2003-04 school year. Of the 608 districts given an AYP determination, 64 percent met AYP goals for all groups of students. By comparison, in 2002-03, less than half of districts (291) met the federal AYP goals for all groups of students. A school or district could receive an Excellent or Effective designation and still be in improvement status if one or more student groups did not meet federal AYP goals for two years in a row. Although the school's or district's performance in the aggregate may be very high, if one or more student groups are not meeting goals, the school or district must make plans to improve its performance.

Table 4.2

State and Federal Accountability Outcomes for Districts, 2004

Designations	Number of Districts	Number of Districts Missing AYP	Number of Districts in District Improvement Status
Excellent	117	20	1
Effective	229	63	2
Continuous Improvement	224	98	22
Academic Watch	34	34	21
Academic Emergency	4	4	3
Not Rated	4	n/a	n/a
Total	612	219	49

Notes: Four districts are too small to yield reliable accountability results. Report card designations are not issued for Put-In-Bay, Kelly's Island, North Bass Island or Middle Bass Island.

Of the 3,901 schools evaluated, 83 percent met statewide goals for AYP in 2003-04 compared to 75 percent in 2002-03 (Table 4.3). There are 488 schools identified as needing improvement for the 2004-05 year because they failed to meet AYP goals for two or more consecutive years through 2003-04.

For schools identified for improvement status, a range of technical assistance and resources are provided. This biennium, approximately $80 million per year in state funds was dedicated to supporting lower-performing schools and districts, and to providing intervention services for individual students who are falling behind academically.

Technical assistance and professional development also are provided to help districts improve curricular and instructional programs, and to redesign schools and redeploy existing funds for greater impact. In addition to state funds, federal Title I and school improvement funds support districts' efforts to improve results for lower-achieving students.

Schools and districts in improvement status must develop an improvement plan and keep parents informed of their reform efforts. Consequences escalate the longer a district or school is in improvement status, and range from offering transfer options or tutoring for students (Title 1 funded schools only) to restructuring of the school or district governance.

Table 4.3

State and Federal Accountability Outcomes for Schools, 2004

Designations	Number of Schools	Number of Schools Missing AYP	Number of Schools in School Improvement Status
Excellent	920	38	17
Effective	906	42	19
Continuous Improvement	1,211	114	139
Academic Watch	125	125	88
Academic Emergency	222	222	159
Not Rated	517	121	66
Total	3,901	662	488

Notes: Excellent and Effective schools can miss AYP for three years before dropping to Continuous Improvement.

Schools with no tested grades and insufficient test data were not given state ratings but were assigned AYP determinations.

How is Ohio Helping to Motivate Better Performance on the State Accountability System?

To help schools and districts use the results of the state accountability system as tools for improvement, Ohio developed a program for identifying, recognizing and highlighting schools that are making substantial progress in ensuring high achievement for all students. In these schools, recognized as *State Superintendent's Schools of Promise*, all demographic groups of students achieve proficiency, even when the schools have large percentages of students who receive free or reduced-price lunches. These schools prove that state accountability goals are attainable and achievement gaps can be eliminated. All students can achieve Ohio's challenging academic standards.

There were 31 schools identified as *Schools of Promise* in 2002-03, and that number increased to 102 in 2003-04. To help share the knowledge gained by observing and surveying these high-performing schools, the *Schools of Promise* program includes a variety of efforts to make educators and the general public aware of the potential for all of Ohio's schools to meet accountability system goals and close achievement gaps. Some of these efforts are:

- Identifying schools annually that meet or exceed specific student performance and diversity criteria to qualify as *Schools of Promise*;
- Issuing news releases about these schools and awarding each school a banner that identifies it as a *School of Promise*;
- Holding events, including forums, network meetings and professional conferences that focus on these schools and the programs, policies and practices that contribute to their students' achievement and the schools' success. These events provide opportunities for educators and administrators from across the state to learn from members of these schools and communities;
- Compiling written success stories about each of the schools to serve as resources for educators and administrators who are interested in improving student achievement for all populations of students in their schools;
- Creating a CD-ROM with supporting materials – an interactive professional development tool describing what's working in Ohio's *Schools of Promise*.

Section 5 examines the successful practices of the *Schools of Promise* program. The *Schools of Promise* are excellent examples of how employing best practices and following guiding principles enables all students to achieve at high levels.

Are Ohio's Students Taught What they are Expected to Learn?

Over the past three years, the State Board of Education has established academic content standards that define what students should learn at each grade in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, foreign language and technology. ODE and the Ohio Board of Regents, which governs the postsecondary educational system in Ohio, created a committee to develop these standards. Subject area committees consisting of parents, teachers, employers, professors and community leaders drafted common expectations of the knowledge that high school graduates should exhibit. Along with a group of elementary school teachers, these committees used the draft expectations to create draft standards and benchmarks. After a period of public presentations and comments, these standards were revised and presented to the State Board of Education and adopted as the academic standards to which each Ohio student would be held.

Achievement results indicate that some, but not all students are learning the content outlined in Ohio's standards. Although the standards are relatively new, it is important to consider whether or not all students are taught the standards. Ohio is using Web-based tools to measure and inform teachers' use of content and performance standards.

Instructional Management System

One measure of teacher interest in curricular reforms is access to the Instructional Management System (IMS), which houses model lesson plans aligned with Ohio's content standards. Created with the help of Ohio teachers, the IMS site received more than 46,000 unique visitors with an average of 555 visits per day in the first 10 months of 2004. It is evident that educators are accessing the model lesson plans, designed to assist in instructional planning (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4

General Statistics for the Ohio Instructional Management System (IMS), 2004

Successful Hits For Entire Site	8,395,751
Average Hits Per Day	26,909
Visits	173,434
Average Per Day	555
Average Visit Length	18 minutes 26 seconds
Unique Visitors	46,018
Visitors Who Visited Once	35,772
Visitors Who Visited More Than Once	10,246

Note: Data are from ODE WebTrends.

ODE is field testing additional means of determining the extent to which the content of instruction is aligned with Ohio's academic content standards and whether instructional practices promote the knowledge and skills represented by the academic content standards.

Are High School Students Being Taught Ohio's Standards?

The State Board of Education's Task Force on Quality High Schools for a Lifetime of Opportunities (2004) found that many high school courses might not be designed to teach Ohio's academic standards. In particular, many courses taken by students in the junior or senior year may not lead to the attainment of junior- and senior-level benchmarks and indicators. The Task Force recommended that Ohio provide all high school students with the opportunity to take a challenging curriculum that prepares them for success in postsecondary education, careers and citizenship – and to complete that curriculum. Other recommendations include:

- Develop multiple models of a core curriculum;
- Allow districts to seek waivers from Carnegie Unit requirements to create challenging programs that meet the needs of students in the area. The State Board of Education also should adopt a policy that allows school districts to seek waivers from the state's Carnegie Unit requirements for graduation. Any district that receives a waiver would be required to develop a curriculum and instructional plan that is consistent with the state's model core curricula and academic content standards through 12th grade and that satisfies other state accountability requirements, including passage of the OGT;
- Support mapping curriculum. To ensure that all students are able to master the content expectations through the 12th grade, the State Board of Education should direct ODE to work with educators across the state to define various ways in which the curricula could be mapped from the early grades through middle school so that students who reach ninth grade are more likely to have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in high school;
- Ensure accountability for challenging models of core curricula;
- Consider alternative assessments beyond the Ohio Graduation Test.

Who Teaches Ohio Students?

Teachers shape classroom learning environments and direct daily learning experiences for Ohio's students. Research suggests the effect of teacher quality on student outcomes is large and persists for several years after the student has left the classroom. Teachers are perhaps the most important factor affecting student learning (Wright, Horn and Sanders, 1997; Rowan, Correnti and Miller, 2002; Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 1998). Specifically, teacher experience, training and professional development all affect student achievement with more experienced, educated and supported teachers generally outperforming their peers.

Data on certified teachers employed by Ohio public schools are presented in Table 4.5. These characteristics have changed little over the last four years.

Table 4.5

Characteristics of Ohio Teachers, Full Time Equivalency, 2001-2004

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Percent Female	72.5%	72.6%	72.6%	72.7%
Average Age	42.8	42.8	43	42.9
Percent Minority	6.6%	7.4%	7.6%	6.8%
Percent Advanced Degree	53.0%	50.7%	49.1%	48.6%
Average Total Years of Experience	NA	13	13	14
Number of Full-Time Teachers	115,261	120,714	121,797	117,383

Notes: Data are from EMIS 2004.

How qualified are Ohio teachers?

Other than years of teaching experience, the demographic characteristics of teachers indicate little about how they perform in the classroom. Because even the most experienced teachers need to know the content they are expected to teach, the No Child Left Behind Act requires that all teachers be highly qualified in the core academic content area(s) in which they teach. It also emphasizes the important role of teacher quality in improving achievement for all students. Research shows that teachers' mastery of the academic content they teach is critical to engaging students and is a significant factor in raising levels of student achievement (Sanders and Rivers, 1996).

All teachers are expected to meet the federal definition of a highly qualified teacher in their core content areas by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. For a teacher to be designated as highly qualified in Ohio, he or she must hold at least a bachelor's degree, hold a full state certificate or licensure in the teaching area and meet one of the following additional qualifications:

- A passing score on the NTE or Praxis II Exam in the content area;
- An academic major in the content area (teachers in grades 7 to 12 only);
- A master's degree in the content area;
- Possession of an eight-year professional certificate or permanent certification in the content area;
- National Board Certification in an area related to the teaching assignment;

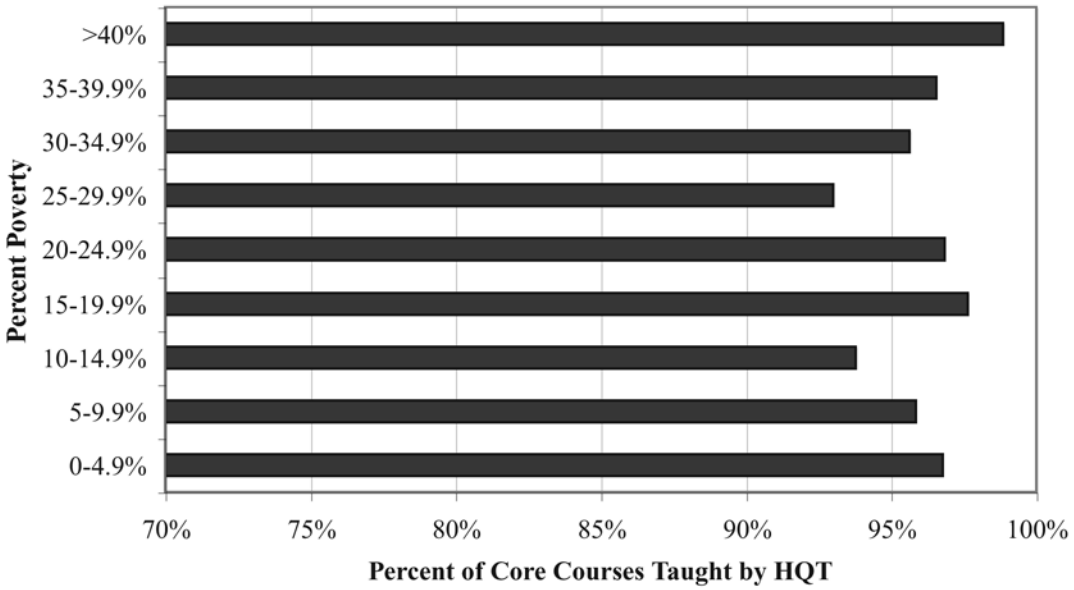
or

- Ninety clock hours of instruction distributed over the topics of teaching skills, grade-appropriate content and Ohio's academic content standards.

Overwhelmingly, Ohio's teachers are meeting these standards of quality. On average, 93.1 percent of core courses in kindergarten through grade eight and 92.7 percent of core courses in grades nine through 12 in Ohio are taught by highly qualified teachers. The standard of quality is maintained across districts of varying poverty levels (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6

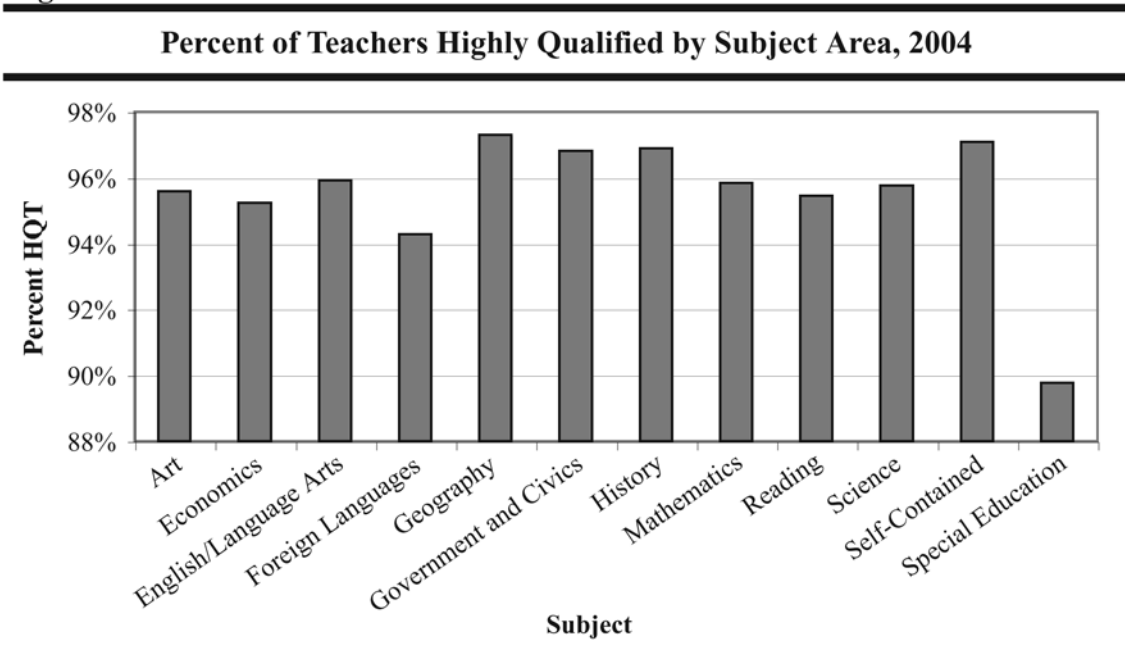
Percent of Core Courses Taught by a Highly Qualified Teacher by District Level Poverty Rate, 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 4.7 depicts the percent of teachers that are highly qualified by the subject area in which they teach. Self-contained classrooms and geography classes have the highest percentage of highly qualified teachers, while special education has the lowest percentage (89.7 percent).

Figure 4.7



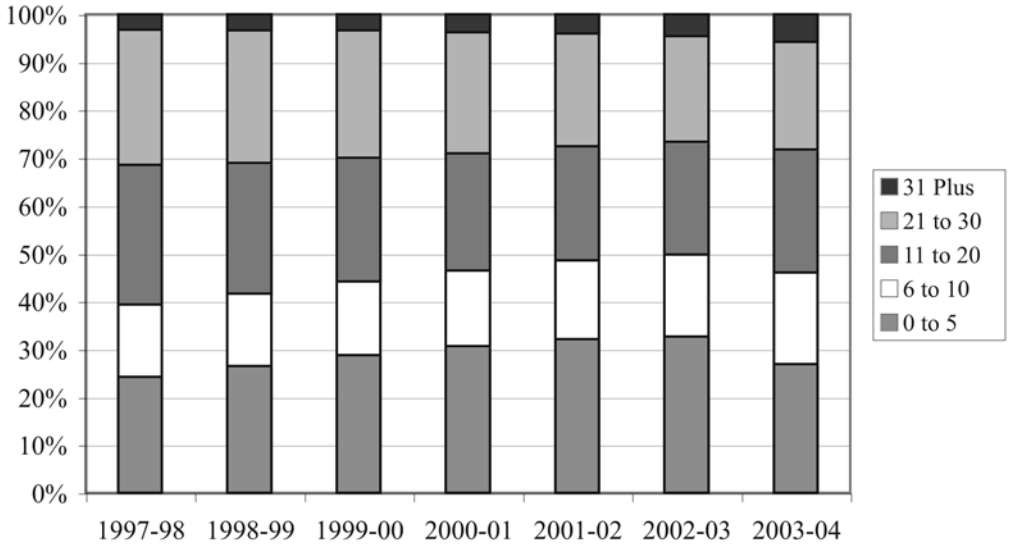
Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

How much experience do Ohio teachers have?

Almost three-fourths of Ohio's teachers have more than five years of classroom experience, with about 30 percent having more than 21 years of classroom experience (Figure 4.8). These master teachers are an important resource in both the education of students and the mentoring of novice teachers. This balance between novice and experienced teachers has been fairly consistent in recent years, mirroring closely the national statistics regarding teacher experience.

Figure 4.8

Years of Experience of Ohio Public School K-12 Teachers, 1998-2004



Note: Data are from ODE Teacher Supply and Demand Study based on EMIS 2004.

How qualified are Ohio's paraprofessionals?

While teachers are the core of the education workforce in Ohio, many other adults provide critical services to teachers and students to support learning goals. Paraprofessionals provide one-on-one tutoring, library, media and computer instruction, and instructional support to teachers. As with Ohio teachers, paraprofessionals in Title I schools are required by No Child Left Behind to meet one of the following four quality standards:

- Complete 48 semester hours or 72 quarter hours at a college or university;
- Have at least an associate's degree from an accredited college or university;
- Score at least 456 (out of 480) on the Praxis II Parapro exam; or
- Pass a local academic assessment.

These requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working primarily as translators or solely on parental involvement activities, or to individuals working in non-instructional roles (food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care service, and non-instructional computer assistance).

Districts and schools began submitting data on the qualifications of their paraprofessionals in the 2004-2005 school year. Paraprofessionals who were hired by districts before January 2002 have until Jan. 8, 2006, to fulfill one of the requirements for qualification. While state-level data are not yet available, the number of qualified paraprofessionals will likely increase continuously as the 2006 deadline approaches.

How are Ohio's Teacher Education Programs Preparing Our Future Educators?

An important component in improving student instruction and the academic environment in Ohio's schools is teacher training programs. Ohio has implemented several requirements to make certain that entry-level teachers are equipped with at least basic teaching knowledge. One of these requirements is a degree from an accredited institute of higher education (IHE).

Ohio's IHE Educator programs are working to align their instruction to the new Ohio content standards. Of the 47 IHE programs, 37 are completely aligned with Ohio's academic content standards in all areas. Ten programs show content alignment in some areas of the program, but not all areas. If an institution's program does not fully align with academic content standards, a letter is sent to the institution describing the changes necessary to reach alignment. The programs are re-examined in one year. As this process has occurred only once to date, no corrective action has been developed for those schools that remain out of alignment after one year.

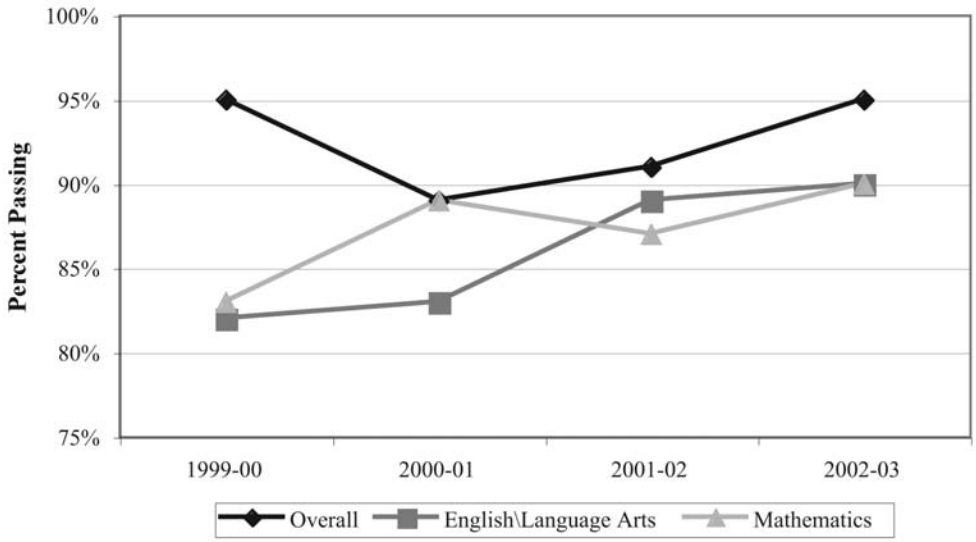
New Ohio teachers also are required to pass basic teaching exams to be licensed. Though the specific exam subjects are determined by the teacher-candidate's core curriculum area, all exams are versions of the Praxis II tests. Specialty tests are available in more than 50 content areas. Teacher candidates must also pass a core exam covering the Principles of Teaching and Learning (PLT) to receive most types of licensure. Successful completion of the appropriate Praxis II tests is designed to ensure that candidates for two-year provisional licensure have acquired the minimal knowledge necessary for entry-level positions.

Figure 4.9 shows that Ohio passing rates on the Praxis II exams have dipped and risen again since 2000. Passage rates in both English/language arts and mathematics have risen an average of eight percentage points since this time.

The Praxis II tests are not expected to predict performance on the job, and passing the licensure examinations does not guarantee good teaching. The tests are built to measure mastery of the knowledge and skills essential to becoming a teacher.

Figure 4.9

Ohio Statewide Praxis II Passage Rate, 2000-2003



Note: Data from Center for the Teaching Profession, ODE, 2004.

How is Ohio Supporting Districts in Ensuring High Quality Teachers for All Students?

In addition to having significant academic qualifications, entry-year teachers in Ohio are required to participate in a formalized support system through the Entry Year Program, introduced in 2002. Through this program, school districts are given up to $2,000 per novice teacher to create a mentoring program between novice and master teachers. To gain a full five-year teaching license, Ohio teachers must successfully complete the Entry Year mentoring program and must also pass the Praxis III exam of classroom instruction and technique. Novice teachers are evaluated on the Praxis II exam by an experienced teacher from another school district who is also a trained Praxis III Assessor.

Are School Environments Conducive to Learning?

Research confirms that students are more likely to attend school and succeed academically if they are healthy, fed and attend school in a safe and orderly environment. Good teaching may not be nearly as effective if students do not feel accepted, safe or valued at school. Educators expend considerable time, energy, and resources creating learning environments that support student learning. This section explores the extent to which these efforts are meeting students' needs.

How Does Nutrition Influence Learning?

National research provides evidence that having meals during the school day improves cognitive development in young children and improves school performance and the overall health of children while reducing behavioral problems (Murphy et al., 1998). In addition, there is conclusive evidence that school meal programs increase attendance. Further, with the pressing concern of childhood obesity reaching epidemic proportions, there is evidence that breakfast programs can help prevent excessive weight gain.

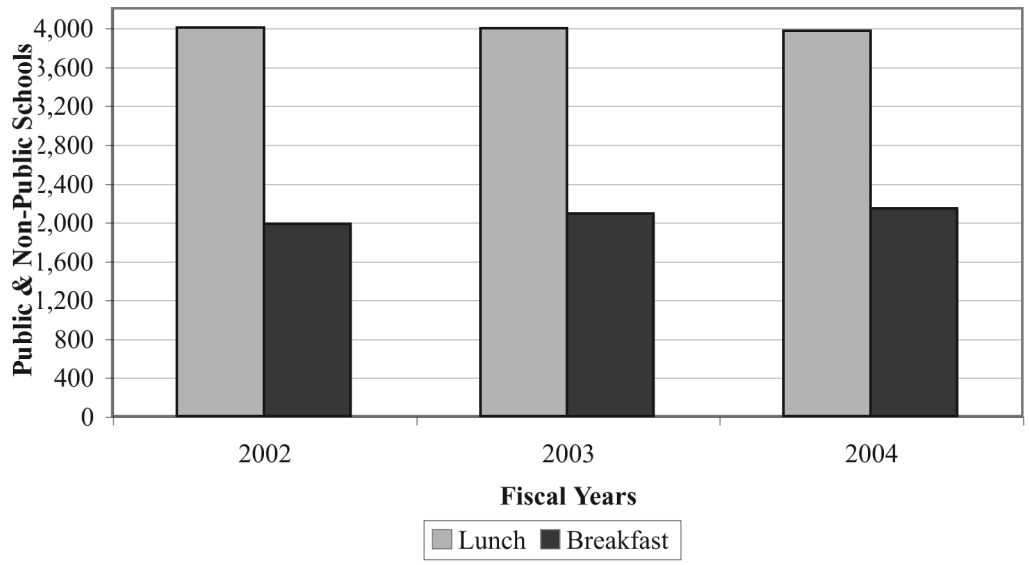
A 1999 study suggests that "scientists are close to making a conclusive judgment that the brain does fluctuate in terms of function, of how well it performs, due to the variability in the availability of fuel and nutrients" (Politt, 1999). For students from families that cannot afford to provide adequate, stable and nutritional meals, the school breakfast, lunch, after-school snack and summer meal programs are essential tools for establishing the right conditions for learning.

Are all students who need school meals receiving them?

Each year, more than 1 million Ohio students (57.8 percent) participate in the free or reduced-price lunch program. Almost every school district in Ohio (99 percent) offers the lunch program. However, for some students lunch may be their first meal of the day. Figure 4.10 shows that the number of schools participating in the breakfast program has increased over a three-year period. Although the increase is significant (approximately 200 additional schools in three years), there are still only half as many schools serving breakfast as lunch. All schools can offer free and reduced-price lunch and/or breakfast.

Figure 4.10

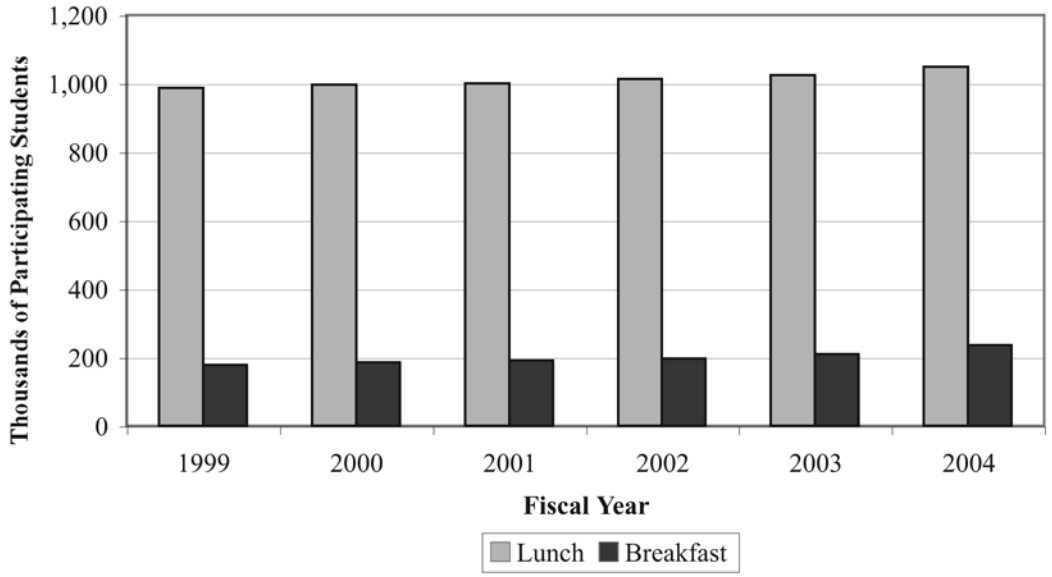
Number of Ohio Schools Offering Free and Reduced-Price Lunch and Breakfast, Fiscal Years 2002-2004



Note: Data are from the Center for Students, Families and Communities, ODE.

Figure 4.11

Ohio Students Participating in Free and Reduced-Price Lunch and Breakfast, Fiscal Years 1999-2004



Note: Data are from Food and Nutrition Services, Child Nutrition Tables.

As Figure 4.11 illustrates, there may be as many as 800,000 Ohio students who qualify for the free or reduced-price breakfast program who do not receive it. Many of these students may receive a nutritious breakfast at home. More research is needed to determine how many students are in need of this service.

ODE is working with school districts and community partners to increase participation in the breakfast programs. However, when compared with other states, Ohio ranks 34th in the nation in the number of schools and students participating in breakfast programs (Food and Research Action Center Breakfast Scorecard, 2004).

Many schools do not offer the breakfast program because of cost issues. To help with these issues, ODE is sharing strategies used by some schools to make the breakfast program self-supporting.

How do Safe and Supportive Environments Influence Learning?

A growing body of research emphasizes the importance of safe and supportive schools for the academic, social, emotional and ethical development of students (Learning First Alliance). Students perform better in schools where relationships are respectful and supportive and where families and communities are involved in their children's education. The education community, while remaining focused on academic standards, recognizes the importance of this research and calls for integrating these concerns in a comprehensive school improvement strategy. For example, the Learning First Alliance's recent call to action, *Every Child Learning: Safe and Supportive Schools* (2001), states that the most effective schools are those where efforts to improve academic outcomes incorporate aligned efforts to create safe and supportive communities that address students' social and emotional needs. The National Conference of State Legislatures' policy brief entitled *School Violence: What works to keep schools safe?* underscores the need to have a comprehensive approach to school safety that addresses social, emotional and cultural factors, identifies programs that support positive youth development and provides strategies for engaging families and communities (Thomerson and Ferrell-Smith).

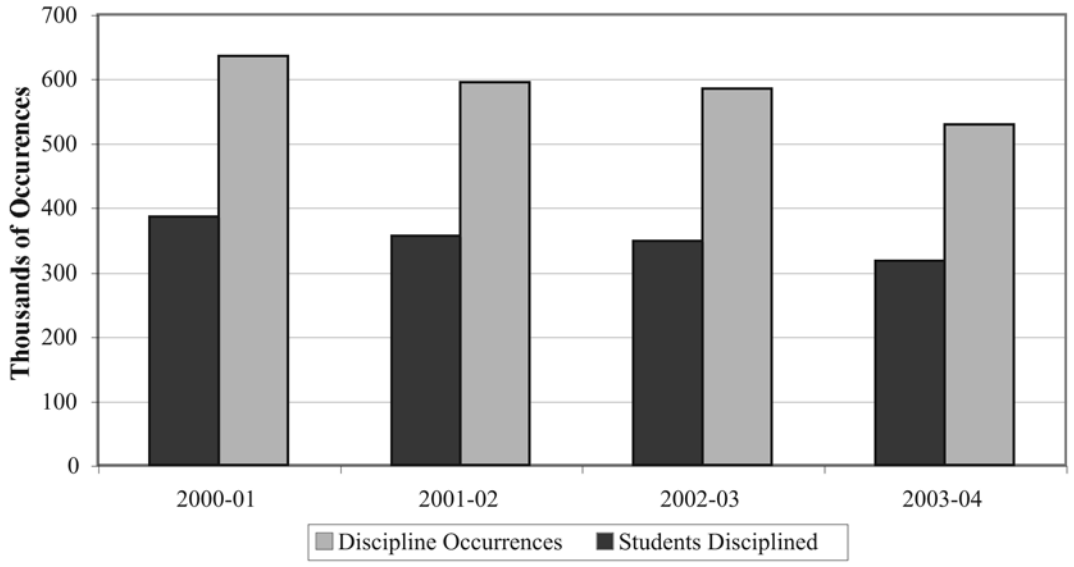
We know that in schools with safe, supportive learning environments, students are less likely to engage in disruptive and destructive behavior and are more likely to graduate. Schools can improve student behavior by improving school climate. School climate policies established by local school boards should be based on the evaluation of school data, included in comprehensive continuous improvement planning and monitored regularly to ensure that they are contributing to improvements in learning results. Ohio strives to support schools as they work to provide safe and supportive learning environments that lead to higher achievement for all students.

Are Discipline problems affecting school environments?

Statewide discipline data show that the number of incidents reported have declined over the past few years. Figure 4.12 shows the number of disciplinary actions reported as well as the number of students that are represented in discipline figures.

Figure 4.12

Discipline Occurrences & Number of Students Disciplined, 2001-2004

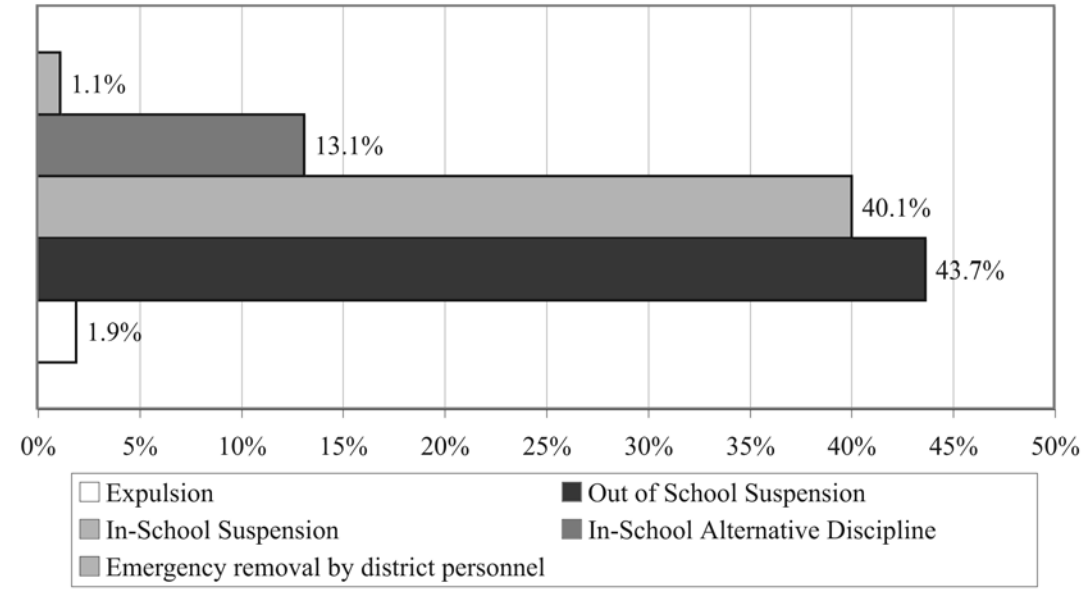


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Based on Figure 4.12, the difference in the number of students disciplined and number of occurrences reveals there are many repeat offenders. The decrease in the number of occurrences and students disciplined can be attributed to programs such as the Positive Behavior Support and Ohio Partners in Character Education, which help students and educators pursue respectful and productive learning environments.

Figure 4.13

Types of Disciplinary Actions Taken in Ohio Public Schools, 2004



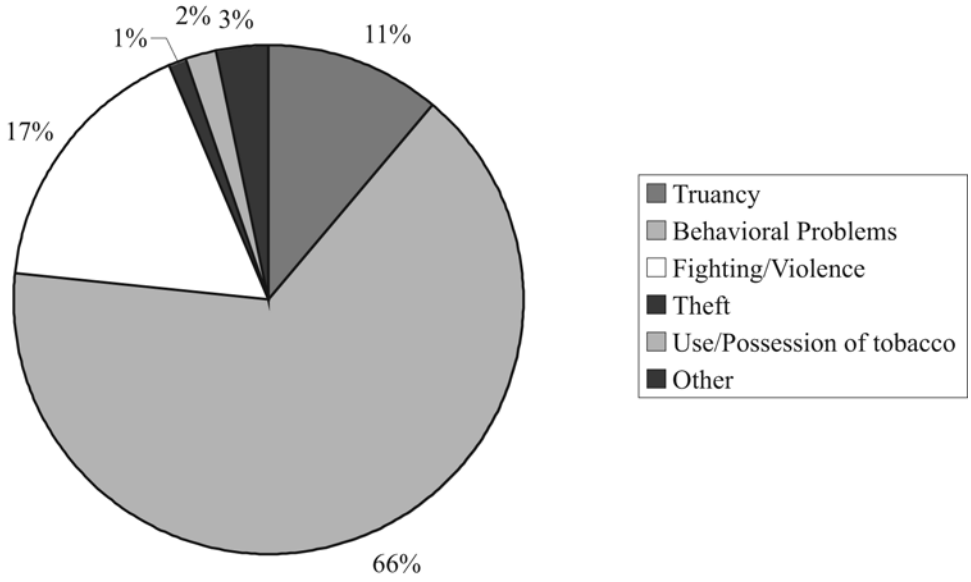
Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Disciplinary actions reported to ODE include expulsions and out-of-school suspensions, and other disciplinary actions such as in-school suspensions. In the 2003-04 school year, out-of-school suspensions were used for 43.7 percent of disciplinary occurrences reported to ODE. In-school suspensions were used in 40.1 percent of cases reported to ODE (Figure 4.13).

Out-of-school suspensions are defined as the denial of attendance at school and the suspension of the student's normal instructional activities by the superintendent or a school principal for discipline reasons. In-school suspensions constitute the removal of the student's normal instructional activities by the superintendent or a school principal due to discipline reasons. The student attends a special class, program or building that specifically addresses the behaviors that resulted in discipline. This may occur within or outside of the district. While out-of-school disciplinary actions are often needed for school safety, research has suggested that students who are not in school are more likely to get into fights, use weapons, try drugs or commit other crimes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1992).

Figure 4.14

Disciplinary Incidences in Ohio Public Schools, 2004

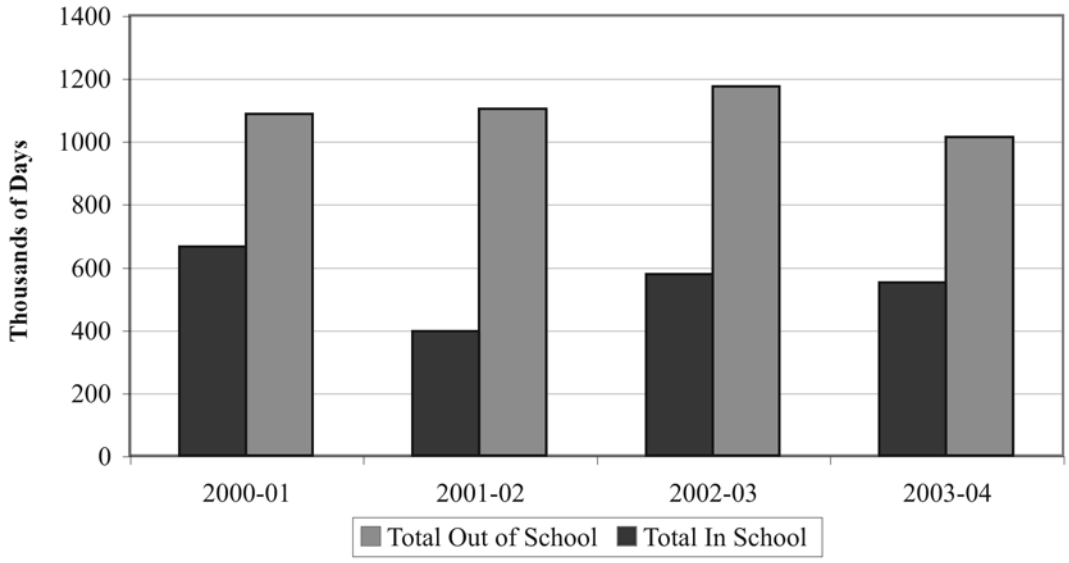


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 4.14 shows the reasons for disciplinary incidences for 2003-04. The most common reason for disciplinary action was behavioral problems (65.5 percent of occurrences), followed by fighting/violence (16.8 percent of cases) and truancy (11.2 percent).

Figure 4.15

Suspension Days by In School and Out of School, 2001-2004

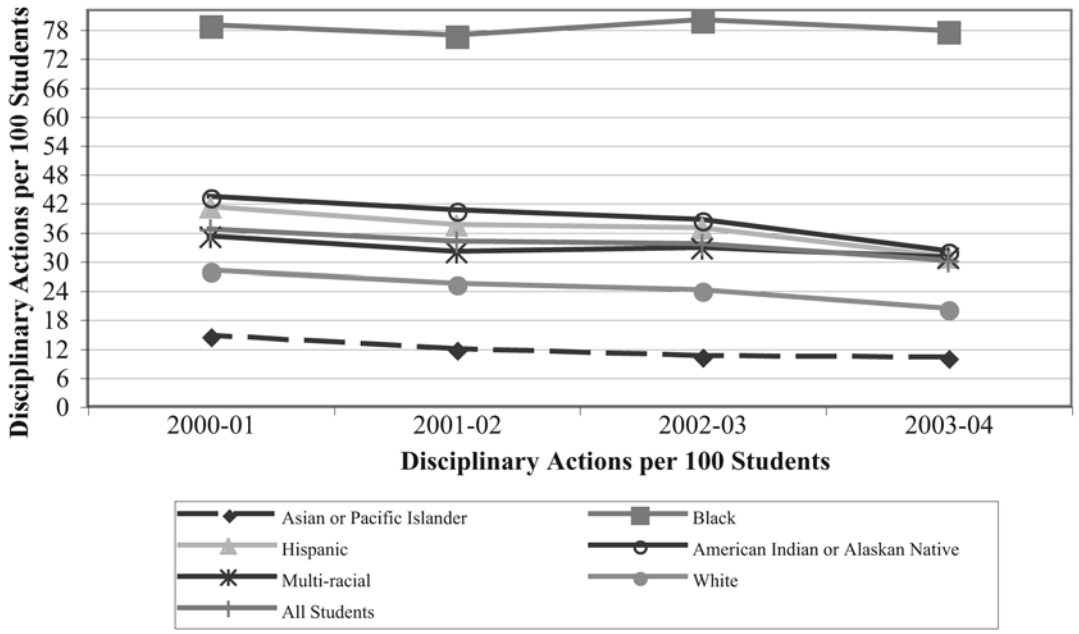


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 4.15 shows the total number of out-of-school days for disciplinary actions in each of the four most recent years. Expulsions and out-of-school suspensions resulted in more than 1 million student days out of school in the 2003-04 school year. This amounted to an average of 21 days out of school per expulsion and three days per suspension. It is important to remember that school policies vary across the state, so decisions to use in-school or out-of-school suspensions differ depending on local policies.

Figure 4.16

Discipline Rates in Ohio Public Schools by Race/Ethnicity, 2001-2004



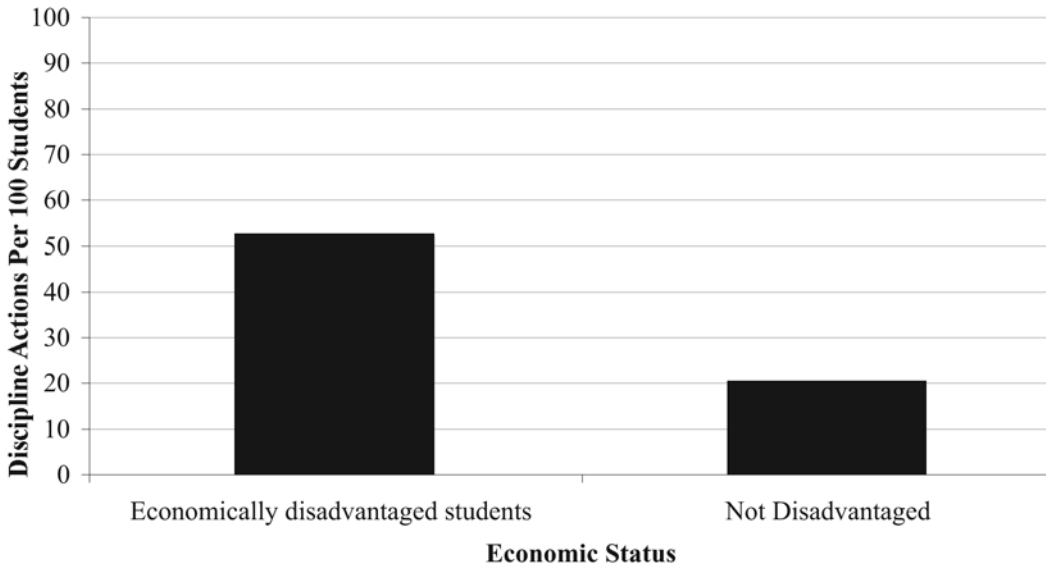
Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Examining discipline rates for students of different racial/ethnic groups helps reveal how learning time might vary for these groups. Students who are being disciplined are not fully participating in classroom learning during the discipline period. Efforts designed to create engaging, safe and supportive school environments can target schools and districts where racially disparate discipline rates exist.

Although overall discipline numbers are declining, the rates for Black students remain more than three times those of White students (Figure 4.16). Between 2000 and 2004, discipline rates declined from approximately 28 per 100 to 20 per 100 for White students. In the same time period, the discipline rate for Black students remained steady at approximately 80 occurrences per 100 students.

Figure 4.17

Discipline Rates in Ohio Public Schools by Economic Status, 2004

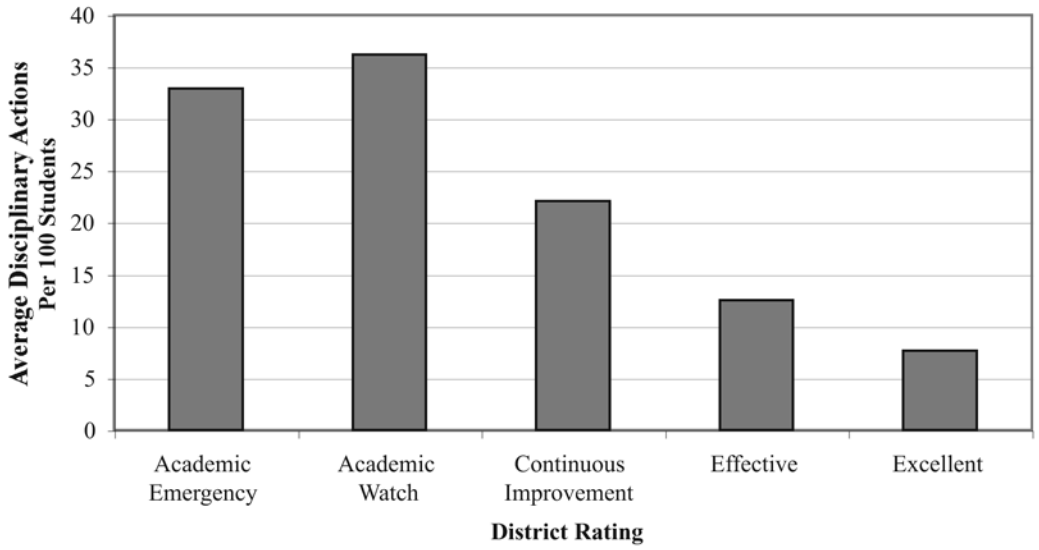


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 4.17 shows that economically disadvantaged students are disciplined at twice the rate of students who are not disadvantaged.

Figure 4.18

Disciplinary Actions per 100 Students by District Rating, 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS.

The relationship between disciplinary actions and overall district ratings is shown in Figure 4.18. This figure demonstrates a clear inverse relationship between districts' discipline rates and academic achievement ratings. The rates of disciplinary action in Academic Emergency and Academic Watch districts were 10 or more percentage points higher, on average, than the discipline rates of Continuous Improvement districts.

How is Ohio Helping Schools Create Safer, More supportive Learning Environments?

Ohio provides approximately $3 million per year in state and federal resources to Ohio school districts to support their efforts to create safe and supportive schools. Districts may use these resources to fund school resource officers, safe and drug-free school program coordinators, character education, school conflict management programs and similar initiatives.

To demonstrate its commitment to school safety, the State Board of Education recently adopted an anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy that will help ensure districts are attentive to issues of school safety. In addition, the State Board recently adopted Guidelines for School Climate (Table 4.19).

Table 4.19

Guidelines for School Climate

Guideline 1	School-Community Partnerships Enable the Provision of Comprehensive Safety, Health and Academic Services for Students and Staff
Guideline 2	An Organizational Framework Grounded in Social and Emotional Learning Theory Maximizes Academic Success and Minimizes Conflict
Guideline 3	Thorough Assessment and Evaluation Ensures Continuous Improvement of the Learning Environment
Guideline 4	High-Quality Staff Development and Administrative Support Lead to Effective Program Implementation
Guideline 5	Elimination, Buffering and Mitigating Real and Perceived Threats to Physical Safety and Security Allow Students to Focus on Learning and Staff Members to Focus on Instruction
Guideline 6	Teaching Social and Emotional Skills Encourages Classroom Participation, Positive Interactions with Teachers and Good Study Habits
Guideline 7	Engagement of Parents and Families in School-Home Learning Partnerships Maximizes the Potential for Effective Instruction and Student Learning
Guideline 8	Youth Empowerment and Engagement Increases Connection to School and Integrates Culturally-Specific Solutions
Guideline 9	Healthy Nutrition Environments and High-Quality School Food Service Support Improvements in Academic Performance and Psychosocial Functioning

These guidelines are being communicated to education professionals throughout Ohio through regional meetings, publications and professional development activities. It is expected that as districts begin to implement the school climate guidelines, discipline rates will continue to decline and school attendance will increase.

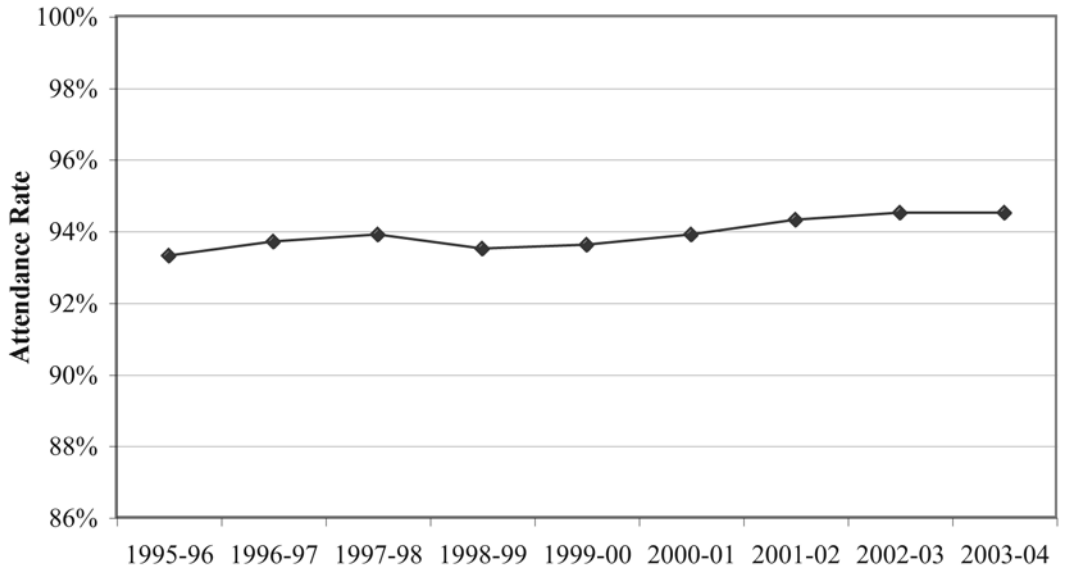
Ohio continues to identify programs and practices that are effective in helping schools improve student behaviors. ODE disseminates information about these practices and supports schools in implementing them. One such set of practices is called Positive Behavior Support (PBS). This program is a comprehensive system for helping school districts build the capacity to teach social and behavioral skills alongside academic skills. Research reveals the strong correlation between behavior and academic success. PBS helps teach the importance of school-wide, group and individual systems of behavioral support. Principal-led, school-based teams examine existing discipline data and determine if additional data should be collected and analyzed to determine what factors may contribute to behavioral incidents in classroom and nonclassroom settings. For the past five years, consultants from each of the 16 Special Education Regional Resource Centers have engaged educators throughout Ohio in learning about PBS. Data collection reveals that in buildings where PBS is fully implemented, behavioral incidents in classrooms and common areas of the school are reduced.

How Does Attendance Influence Learning?

National research demonstrates the importance of student attendance on learning outcomes. One of the most enduring findings of educational research relates to the importance of time on task, or the actual class time spent learning. Higher rates of attendance can lead to higher achievement test results (Lamdin, 1996). Conversely, researchers have found chronic absenteeism to be correlated with low self-esteem, poor academic performance and a low IQ (McCluskey, 2004). Most directly, student absenteeism limits exposure to curriculum and reduces the opportunity to learn important academic content.

Figure 4.20

Ohio Public School Attendance Rates, 1996-2004



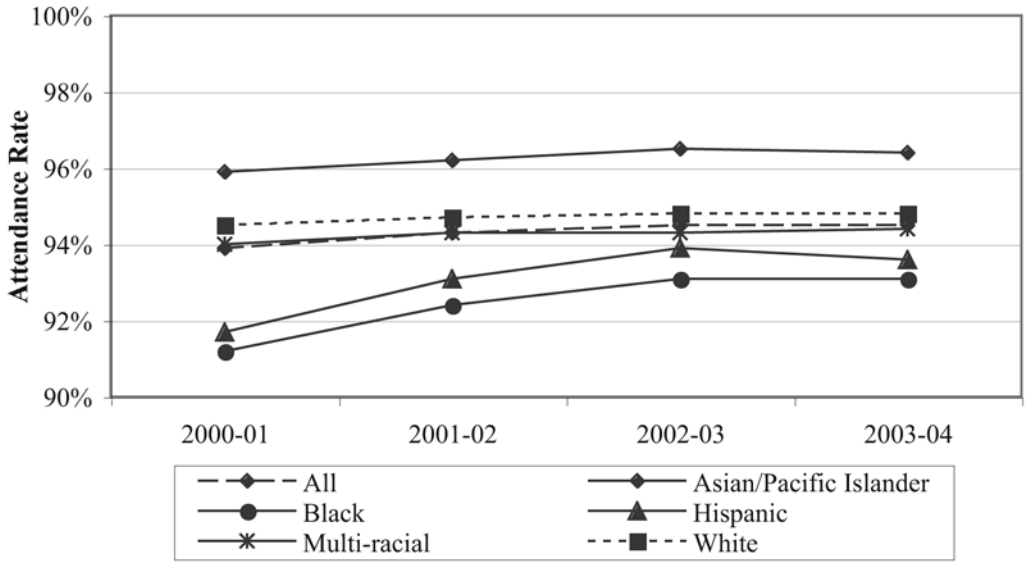
Notes: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Do Ohio's Students Attend School Regularly?

Attendance rates across the state have been increasing slightly over the past several years. The attendance rate was 93.3 percent in 1995-96 and has increased to 94.5 percent in 2003-04 (Figure 4.20).

Figure 4.21

Ohio Public School Attendance Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2001-2004



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004.

Figure 4.21 shows the disaggregated attendance rate from 2000-01 to 2003-04. The pattern of overall increase statewide is comparable to that of disaggregated groups. The largest gains in the past four years were made by Hispanic and Black students.

ODE has encouraged schools to focus on attendance by highlighting the issue in the state accountability system. Schools and districts with attendance rates of at least 93 percent earn one performance indicator. In 1999-2000, 592 districts earned this indicator. In 2003-04, 603 districts earned this indicator.

What Resources Are Available to Support Education in Ohio?

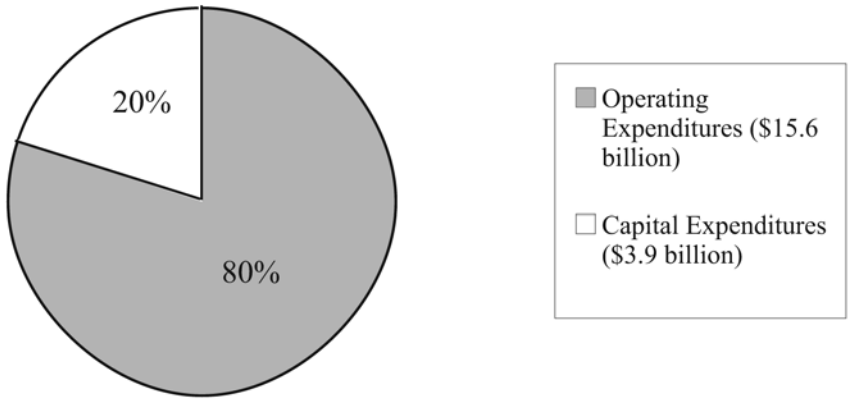
Schools and districts rely on three main sources of revenue – local, state and federal governments. These resources are used to support not only the daily expenses incurred teaching children, such as paying teacher salaries and buying supplies, but also maintaining the infrastructure of the district, including buildings and buses. District revenue and expenditures are closely monitored at both the local and state levels.

Total State Spending on Primary and Secondary Education

In FY 2004, city, local and exempted village school districts, joint vocational school districts, educational service centers and community schools spent a combined $19.5 billion to educate and transport Ohio's school children and to build and maintain facilities appropriate for learning to take place. As shown in Figure 4.22, operating expenditures, e.g., salaries and supplies, comprised 80 percent of total spending on primary and secondary education in Ohio, with the remaining 20 percent devoted to capital goods such as facilities and school bus purchases.

Figure 4.22

Total State Spending for Primary and Secondary Education, Fiscal Year 2004



Note: Data are from EMIS Financial, FY 2004 – Cost per Pupil Report. Capital expenditures includes capital outlay and debt-service payments.

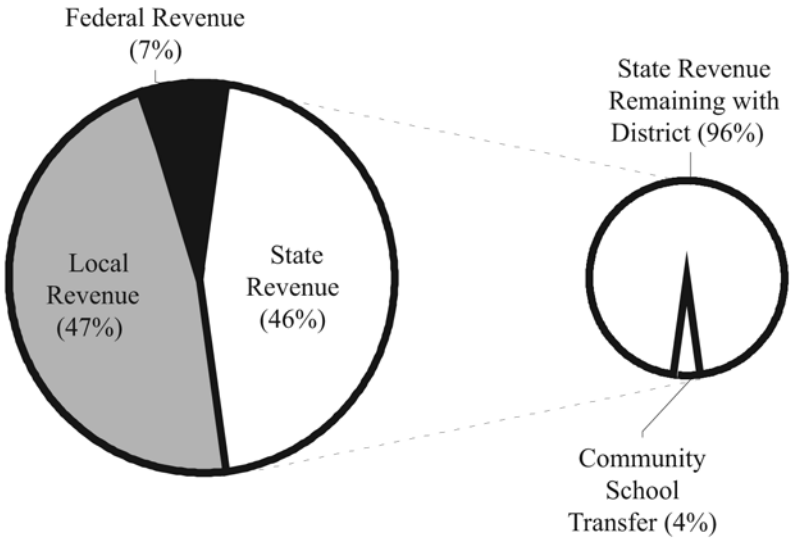
School District Operations

School districts rely on local, state and federal revenue to operate. Statewide, city, local and exempted village school districts received a combined $15.6 billion in local, state and federal revenue in FY 2004 to support operating expenses. The bulk of this funding was split equally between local (47 percent) and state (46 percent) sources with the remaining funds coming from the federal government (Figure 4.23).

Under the state foundation formula for school district funding, a portion of state revenue (4 percent in FY 2004, or $306 million) is deducted from the amount allocated to districts and transferred to community schools serving district residents.

re 4.23

School District Revenue by Source, Fiscal Year 2004

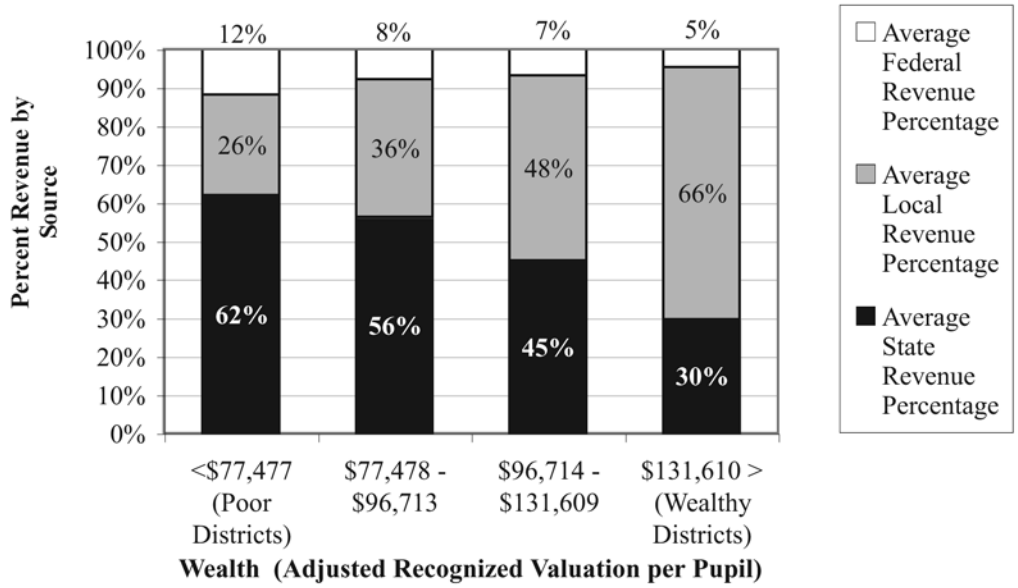


ata are from EMIS Financial and Community School Payment Reports, FY 2004. Represents total operating revenue reported
5 city, local and exempted village school districts. Includes rollback and homestead exemption.

While state sources comprised an average of 46 percent of school district revenue in FY 2004, it is important to note that the amount of state funding an individual district receives relies heavily on the amount of funding the district can generate through local property and income taxes. Figure 4.24 illustrates the relationship between state funding and local wealth. Each bar represents quartiles of districts sorted by their adjusted recognized valuation per pupil – a measure of local property wealth – for FY 2004. The height of each bar segment represents the percent of funding received from local, state and federal sources in FY 2004 by the districts in each quartile.

Figure 4.24

Revenue by Source by District Wealth, Fiscal Year 2004



Note: Data are from the SF-3 Reports (FY 2004 – Final Version #2). Adjusted recognized valuation per pupil break points represents the distribution of adjusted recognized valuation per pupil grouped by quartile.

As the graph suggests, the lower a district's wealth, the higher the percent of state and federal funding, relative to other districts, a district will receive. For property-poor districts – those with an adjusted recognized valuation per pupil of less than $77,477 – state revenue averaged 65 percent of their total revenue in FY 2004. For property-wealthy districts – those with an adjusted recognized valuation per pupil in excess of $131,610 – state revenue averaged only 30 percent of their total revenue.

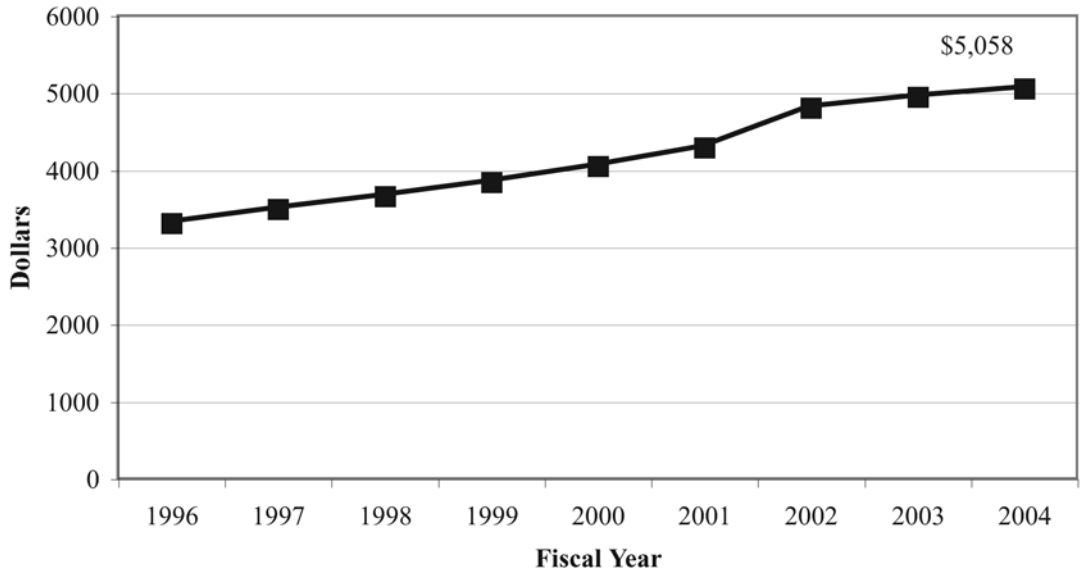
State Revenue Distribution – The State Foundation Formula

The equalizing effect of the state resources is based on the state foundation formula – the principal mechanism for distributing state aid to school districts. The formula is primarily driven by a foundation level, which is the minimum per-pupil funding amount the state provides. The state foundation formula assures that each district is able to generate the foundation-level of funding for each of its students through a combination of local and state resources. Under the formula, districts with less property wealth receive more state aid than wealthier districts.

Figure 4.25 illustrates the foundation level from FY 1996 to FY 2004.

Figure 4.25

State Foundation Levels, Fiscal Years 1996-2004



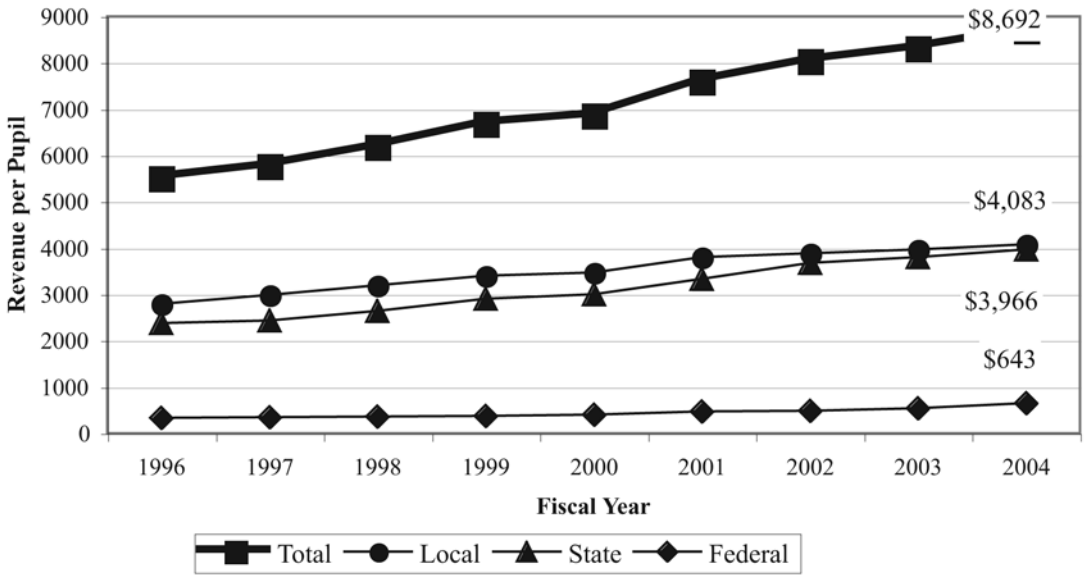
Note: Data from Section 3317.012 Ohio Revised Code & former Section 3317.022 Ohio Revised Code.

Revenue per Pupil

On a per-pupil basis, Ohio's school districts received a combined average of $8,692 per pupil in operating revenue from local, state and federal sources in FY 2004. Figure 4.26 illustrates the trend in per-pupil operating revenue from these sources over time.

Figure 4.26

Operating Revenue per Pupil, Fiscal Years 1996-2004



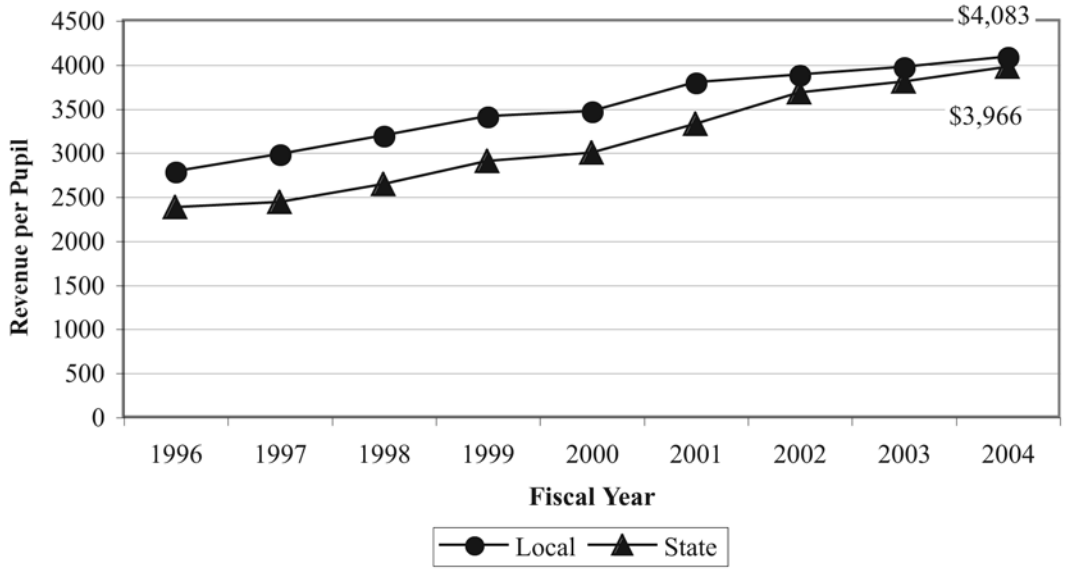
Note: Data are from EMIS Financial, FY 2004.

The general trend depicted by this figure shows that all sources of operating revenue have increased since FY 1996.

When looking specifically at local and state revenue trends over time, the gap narrows between these two sources of funding. Figures 4.27 and 4.28 depict local and state operating revenue per pupil. Figure 4.27 shows the actual operating revenue reported by districts in each of the fiscal years depicted. Figure 4.28 shows the same revenue figures, but adjusts these figures into 1996 dollars to account for the effects of inflation.

Figure 4.27

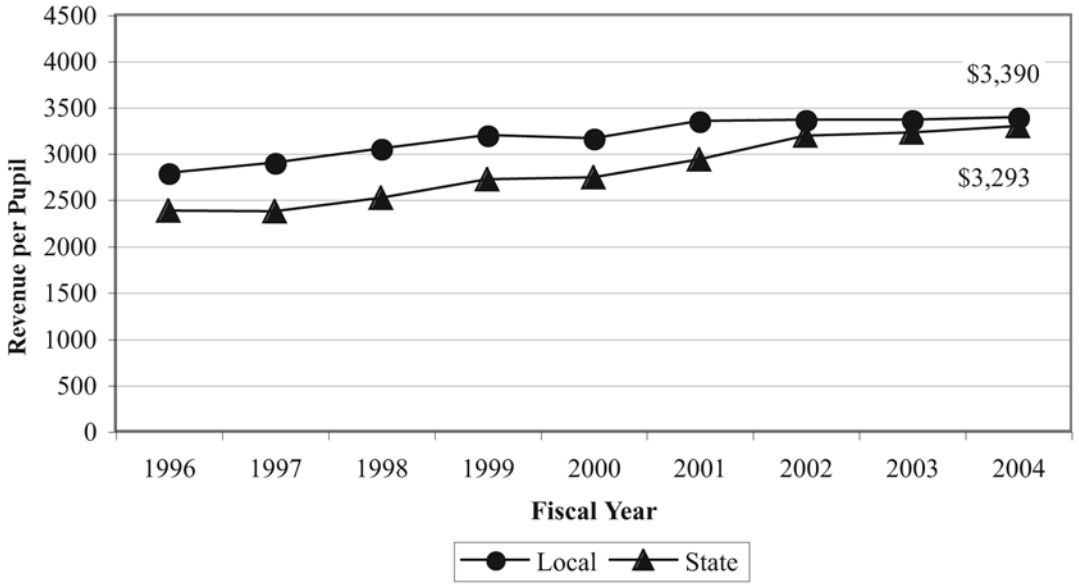
Local and State Operating Revenue per Pupil (Actual Dollars), Fiscal Years 1996-2004



Note: Data are from EMIS Financial, FY 2004-2006.

Figure 4.28

Local and State Operating Revenue per Pupil (Inflation Adjusted, FY 1996 Dollars), Fiscal Years 1996-2004



Note: Data are from EMIS Financial, FY 2004-2006 Inflation adjustment was calculated using Consumer Price Index (CPI) as supplied by the Ohio Office of Budget and Management (OBM).

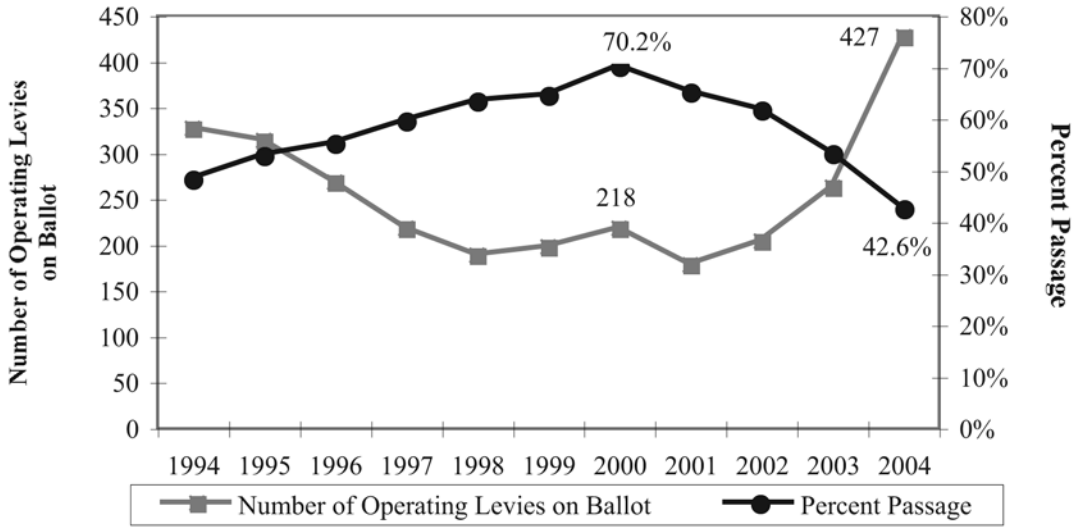
Comparing these two figures reveals that while state revenue has continued to increase over time, the leveling off of the increase in local revenue has narrowed the gap between local and state revenue in recent years.

This leveling off in the growth of local resources also can be seen when examining the number and passage rate of school district operating levies placed before voters over time. Figure 4.29 depicts the number and passage rate of local operating levies from calendar year 1994 through 2004.

Since 2000, districts increasingly have turned to voters for financial support with declining rates of success. While the number of levies on the ballot increased from 218 to 427 between 2000 and 2004, the percent of those levies that received voter approval declined from 70 percent to 43 percent during the same time period.

Figure 4.29

Number and Percent Passage of Operating Levies (Statewide), Fiscal Years 1994-2004



Note: Data are from the Ohio Department of Education, Center for School Finance.

School District Expenditures

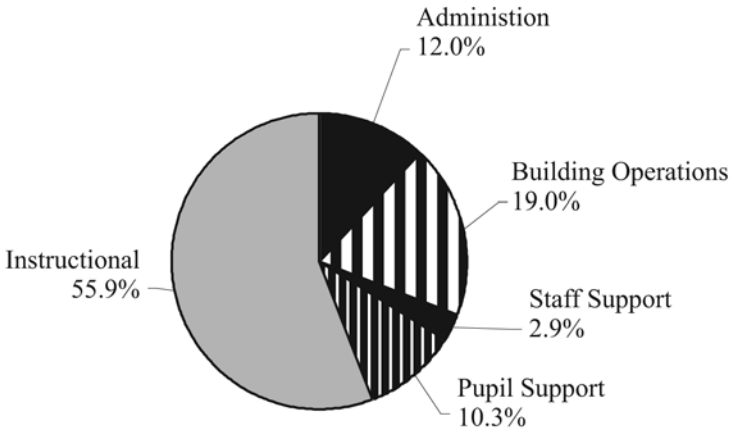
How do school districts spend their money?

Figure 4.30 breaks down district operating expenditures into five areas:

1. Instruction — salaries and benefits paid to teachers and classroom supplies;
2. Administration — including both central office and building level administration;
3. Building operations — such as utilities and food service;
4. Staff support — such as professional development; and
5. Pupil support — such as guidance and psychological services.

Figure 4.30

School District Expenditures by Area, Fiscal Year 2004



Note: Data are from the Expenditure Flow Model, Local Report Card, FY 2004.

As seen in the chart, the bulk of district spending in FY 2004 was for instruction (56 percent). The next highest expenditure category was building operations, averaging 19 percent of district expenditures. The percentage of spending in all five areas has remained relatively constant over time. On a per-pupil basis, school districts spent an average of $8,775 per pupil in FY 2004, with instructional expenditures accounting for $4,903 per pupil.

Fiscal Status of Ohio's School Districts

Ohio law provides a graduated series of interventions designed to ensure school districts avoid deficits and remain fiscally solvent. The first of these interventions, Fiscal Caution, may be declared by ODE when a district is projecting a current or next year operating deficit.

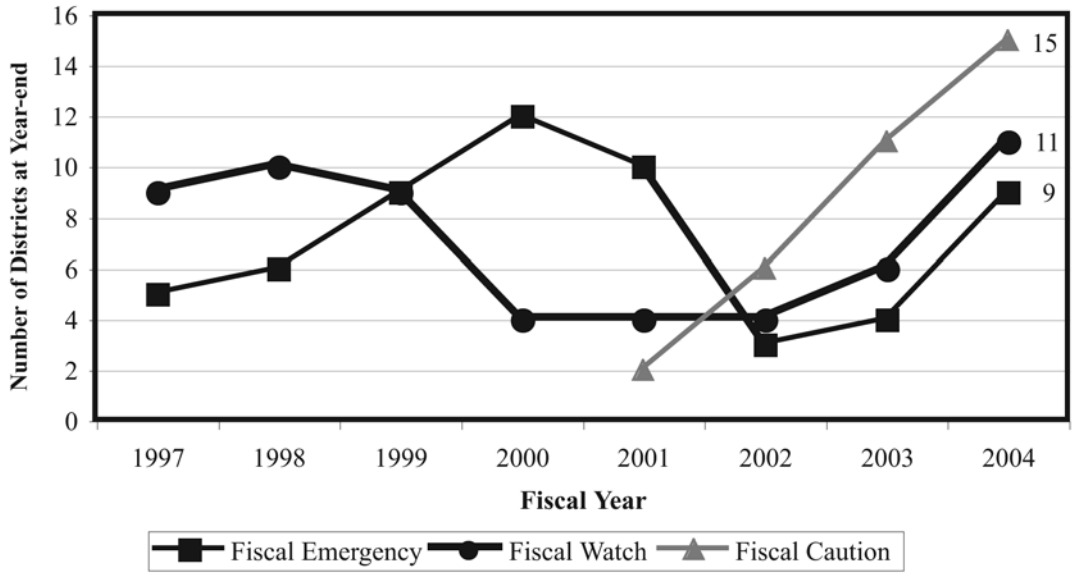
The next intervention, Fiscal Watch, may be declared by the Auditor of State when it certifies a potential deficit in excess of 2 percent of the school district's general fund revenue from the previous year or when a district fails to submit an acceptable plan under Fiscal Caution. Districts in Fiscal Caution or Fiscal Watch must submit a written plan to ODE outlining how they will bring their revenue and expenditures in line.

The final and most severe intervention, Fiscal Emergency, may be declared by the Auditor of State when it certifies a potential deficit in excess of 10 percent of a district's prior year general fund revenue or when a district fails to submit an acceptable plan under Fiscal Watch. Districts in Fiscal Emergency are governed by a commission that oversees the district finances.

Figure 4.31 shows the number of districts in Fiscal Caution, Fiscal Watch and Fiscal Emergency at the end of each fiscal year. Districts can move up and down the ladder of interventions as district finances worsen or improve. As a result, a district can be in Fiscal Caution at the end of one year and then in Fiscal Watch at the end of the next. (Note: Fiscal Caution status did not exist prior to FY 2001.)

Figure 4.31

Districts in Fiscal Caution, Watch and Emergency Status, Fiscal Years 1997-2004



Note: Data are from the Ohio Department of Education, Center for School Finance, Office of Finance and Management Services.

School District Facilities (Capital)

Until the creation of the Ohio School Facilities Commission in 1997, the funding of school construction and renovation rested mainly with local district residents. In creating the commission to help manage and fund school building renovation and construction, the state of Ohio became heavily involved in school facilities by targeting resources to those districts most in need. Through its four programs, the Classroom Facilities Assistance Program, the Accelerated Urban Initiative Program, the Exceptional Needs Program and the Expedited Local Partnership Program, the commission has developed or completed projects in more than half of the state's school districts – renovating or building 270 schools and spending $3.5 billion. More information about the Ohio School Facilities Commission can be found on its Web site: http://www.osfc.state.oh.us/.

What is Ohio doing to Help Schools and Districts in Need of Improvement?

To provide more support to low-performing schools and increase the achievement of students in all schools, Ohio allocates substantial amounts of time and money to implement strong intervention programs. Ohio's intervention programs target different subject, population and grade-level students to achieve the most impact on school-aged learners. Many of these programs are focused on teaching and learning in the core curriculum areas of language arts and mathematics upon which higher level learning is based. The following represents the range of programs and services that Ohio provides to support schools and districts – it is not a comprehensive list.

Literacy Intervention

Ohio's investment in literacy intervention programs is producing strong results. In 1998, the passage rate on the Ohio Fourth-Grade Proficiency Test in reading was 48 percent. The results in the 2003-2004 school year reached 70.8 percent. The Grade Three Reading Achievement Test, administered for the first time in 2003-04, saw more than 78 percent of Ohio's students achieving proficient or higher.

These advances are promising, but there is still room for improvement. Ohio recognizes that literacy is the foundation for all academic achievement and that literacy development should be viewed as a lifelong endeavor. All literacy improvement and intervention initiatives are grounded in scientifically-based research, and all products and services are evaluated and updated continuously to maximize impact.

Ohio's literacy improvement focuses on four major areas:

All students need to be supported to advanced levels of literacy skills that help them acquire academic content. Reading and other literacy skills such as writing, speaking, listening, viewing and thinking, are tools used to acquire academic content knowledge. As students advance through the grade levels, they must advance from the basic skill of word recognition to the core of reading, which includes comprehension, learning while reading, reading in the content areas, and reading in the service of secondary or higher education, of employability and of citizenship.

Literacy should be viewed as part of a developmental continuum that changes over the course of a student's education and across contexts. This is a normal part of literacy development. For example, many excellent early readers will falter or fail in later-grade academic tasks if the teaching of reading is neglected in the middle and secondary grades. Students need continued support and guidance to advanced levels of literacy useful for comprehending and learning from increasingly complex, content-rich materials.

Literacy instruction should be based on sound scientific evidence. Evidence-based instruction or scientifically-based research refers to practices that have a record of success. Strong evidence is the basis for sound curriculum decisions and instructional approaches, which ultimately support intervention efforts.

All teachers are literacy teachers. For more than 20 years, reading scholars have articulated the need for all teachers to consider themselves as reading or literacy teachers. Students need more than basic literacy skills to succeed beyond high school. They need literacy skills useful for comprehending and learning from multiple information sources, including both print and nonprint texts that they encounter every day.

Several programs using these guidelines have been implemented. These programs are designed to ensure that every student in Ohio is a proficient reader.

OhioReads Grants

These competitive grants began in the 1999-2000 school year and continue to be awarded at the building level to target low-performing, kindergarten through fourth-grade students. The funds are used to implement research-based prevention and intervention programs to improve student reading skills. Volunteers who work with students one-on-one or in small groups support local literacy programs. Schools monitor and report student progress annually. Currently, this program serves 1,800 schools and reaches 150,000 kindergarten through fourth-grade students who benefit from the assistance of more than 50,000 volunteers statewide.

Parents and community members must be involved and support the programs to ensure student achievement. OhioReads also provides resources and programs that support volunteer reading and tutoring programs and involve families and communities in literacy education. Public schools are eligible to apply for stipends to fund coordinators who work with designated reading professionals, principals and teachers. These coordinators also recruit and train volunteers. In addition, the funding can be used to reimburse schools for the cost of completing background checks on volunteers, to train tutors and to align existing reading and tutoring programs with classroom reading instruction.

Adolescent Literacy Initiative Grants

The Adolescent Literacy Intervention Grants are designed to help middle and high schools develop and implement structured plans for improving adolescent literacy achievement across the curriculum. These plans should include components of instructional improvements (e.g., research-based literacy instruction), extra time for learning (e.g., professional development, leadership, extended time for literacy instruction), high-quality materials and home-community-school partnerships, providing safety nets for reading development and comprehension of academic content texts.

These competitive grants will be awarded to low-performing schools and will assist schools in implementing research-based preventions and interventions that address the full spectrum of adolescents' developmental needs. Results from the 2004-05 proficiency tests and district performance data will be used to determine eligible buildings. This program will serve approximately 200 schools and an estimated 75,000 students.

Reading First

Reading First-Ohio is a federally funded, six-year effort to improve literacy in kindergarten through third grade. In the first year of implementation (2003-04), Ohio gave 65 schools in 12 high-need districts funds to participate in Reading First-Ohio. ODE has contracted with major Ohio universities, including Cleveland State University, John Carroll University and the University of Akron, to initiate activities that support the professional development and technical assistance needed to implement the Reading First-Ohio program. Prescriptive in nature and focused on changing classroom instruction, the program mandates scientific, research-based reading instruction plans, staff development, required assessments and technology and appropriate materials to target the lowest-performing, highest-poverty schools.

Reading Recovery Training Network

Reading Recovery is a short-term intervention of one-on-one tutoring for low-achieving first-graders. In Reading Recovery each student receives a 30-minute lesson from a specially trained Reading Recovery teacher every school day for 12 to 20 weeks. The Ohio training network provides professional development for literacy teachers in the Reading Recovery methodology and supports the cost of release time for the teacher trainers. Teacher trainers are required to participate in year-long, graduate-level training, followed by continuous professional development.

English Language Acquisition
This grant assists school districts in meeting the special language needs of national-origin minority and limited English proficient (LEP) students to ensure that these students have equal educational opportunities to achieve the state performance standards. Grant money helps school districts develop programs to close the academic achievement gap between LEP students and their peers.

Volunteer Tutor Support and Family/Community Engagement
This intervention provides resources and programs that support volunteer reading and tutoring programs and involve families and community members in literacy education. Public schools will be eligible to apply for a stipend for the person who coordinates the activities, for the person who works with the designated reading professional, for the principal and teachers who build the local program, and for the person who recruits and trains volunteers. This funding stream will also be used to reimburse schools for the cost of completing background checks on volunteers. The funds also can be allotted to train tutors and to strengthen existing reading and tutoring programs by helping schools align tutoring with classroom reading instruction. Currently, 50,000 tutors serve 1,800 elementary schools statewide.

While mastering literacy and language arts is fundamental to all other types of learning, mathematics and science are important too. Students with strong fundamental knowledge of mathematics and science have more opportunities for achievement.

Math/Science Intervention

Mathematics and Science Partnership Program
The No Child Left Behind Act authorizes a Mathematics and Science Partnerships program, which is designed to increase the academic achievement of students in mathematics and science by enhancing the content knowledge and teaching skills of classroom teachers. Partnerships between high-need school districts and the science, technology, engineering and mathematics faculty in institutions of higher education are at the core of these improvement efforts.

General Intervention to Districts and Schools

Subject-specific intervention can help significantly improve student achievement. However, students and teachers do not exist in isolated classrooms. Ohio supports districts that need improved teaching and learning environments through the following programs and services.

Student Intervention Services
General student intervention services support the goals to: 1) extend the curricular instruction time or to extend the school day/school year for all students in kindergarten through fourth-grade who are significantly below grade level expectations in reading and mathematics, based on diagnostic or achievement tests, and; 2) to extend the curricular instruction time or the school day/school year for all ninth- and 10th-graders in Academic Watch or Academic Emergency districts who are at risk of failing the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT). An estimated 217,000 children in kindergarten through fourth grade will need intervention in reading and mathematics to pass the third-grade reading and fourth-grade mathematics achievement tests. This program will serve approximately 134,500 students.

Intervention for Low-Performing Districts
In FY 2005, this activity will provide additional academic intervention funds to schools with three-year average graduation rates of less than 75 percent. Funds are subsequently directed to academic intervention for students who have failed the OGT. Districts work with community partners to develop alternative education strategies for at-risk children and youth who have been suspended or expelled, have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out, are habitually or chronically truant, are disruptive in class, are on probation from the juvenile court or are on parole from a Department of Youth Services facility. This program is administered in consultation with the Alternative Education Advisory Council.

Urban Alternative Challenge Grants
Ohio's 21 urban school districts and communities receive funding through this program to help them implement successful innovative practices in alternative education. The program targets technical assistance and resources for alternative learning environments to guarantee that all urban children achieve literacy by the end of primary school and that all students meet current and future graduation requirements.

Rural Alternative Challenge Grants
This activity provides 100 rural grants to 490 districts to help them implement successful innovative practices in alternative education. In FY 2003, 33,569 students participated in the urban and rural alternative programs, and nearly 85 percent of the program participants achieved successful outcomes by returning to regular classrooms, advancing grade levels, graduating from high school or earning GEDs.

Alternative Schools Technical Support
Technical assistance and support for the alternative schools programs, including monitoring, oversight and technical support for 122 alternative education grants to urban and rural district, comes from this program.

21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC)
Communities can use funds from this grant to establish or expand academic enrichment activities in community learning centers including tutorial services for students attending low-performing schools. The program increases time-on-task outside the regular school day for students and gives them the additional academic tasks they need to master skills in mathematics and reading so they meet both local and state standards. In addition, 21st CCLC programs provide youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, technology education programs, art, music, and recreation programs, and counseling and character education that enhance academics. They give students and their families opportunities to learn new skills and discover new abilities after the school day has ended. Funds are distributed to competitively selected grantees for a five-year period, with a maximum of $500,000 per year. In 2004, 46 grantees received an average of $225,000.

Intervention for Students With Disabilities

Develop and Disseminate Products Focused on Improving Results for Learners Most At Risk
ODE has worked with the Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center, the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators and the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators to develop tools that building teams can use to align curriculum and instruction for students with disabilities with Ohio's academic content standards. One product is a CD that provides an overview of standards-based instruction and how to align IEP goals with academic content standards. A second product – called the Treasure Chest – describes strategies for standards-based assessment and instruction, effective co-teaching models and intervention assistance teams. Both products are being incorporated into professional development programs provided through the Special Education Regional Resource Centers (SERRC) network. Additional products, including a principal's guide to the Treasure Chest and a facilitator's guide to the Treasure Chest, will be developed during the 2004-05 school year.

Align SERRC Work Scope with ODE Mission and Goals

The work scope of Ohio's Special Education Regional Resources Centers (SERCCs) network is being restructured to offer high-quality professional development and technical assistance to district and building personnel, and allow families to have a greater impact on improving outcomes and results for students with disabilities. SERRCs provide ongoing professional development and technical assistance in designing and implementing standards-based instruction for students with disabilities and the differentiation of instruction to assist students with disabilities in making progress toward reaching grade-level benchmarks. In addition, SERCC personnel show schools how to use the standards-based alternate assessment, and work with building teams to implement Ohio's State Improvement Grant (SIG) model, which focuses on scientifically-based reading improvement strategies, the use of progress monitoring and the implementation of school-wide Positive Behavior Support (PBS).

Academic Systems of Support

Through Ohio's SIG activities, SERRCs are now selecting districts in School Improvement status and working at the district level to target buildings that will implement integrated models of improvement. These integrated models incorporate PBS and reading improvement strategies and are taught to staff members through a high-quality professional development structure. Principal-led building teams are shown how to use a Web-based data collection tool, how to monitor behavioral and reading improvements and how to ensure that the integrated model is sustained over time. In addition to SIG activities, ODE continues to work with the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators and the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators to offer summer training opportunities for new principal-led PBS teams.

Focused Attention on Prevention and Intervention

ODE has established a formal relationship with the federally funded National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems and the National Institute for Urban School Improvement to promote assessment and instructional practices that focus on intervention and the differentiation of instruction, rather than on eligibility and identification for special education, particularly with regard to the disproportionate identification of racial/ethnic populations.

Paperwork Burden Reduction

With input from key stakeholder groups such as the Ohio School Boards Association and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, ODE developed three versions of the model special education procedures to assist districts in complying with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements (34 CFR 300.220). All three versions are less prescriptive than previous statewide model policies and procedures, reducing the number of required forms from 80 to eight. This streamlined approach responds to teachers' need for more time spent on instruction and less on filling out paperwork.

Focused Monitoring to Improve Performance

Ohio is one of several states working with the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring to restructure Ohio's special education monitoring system around key data sets and indicators (e.g., disproportionate representation of Black students in special education; decrease in the gap between performance rates on state and district assessment for children with and without disabilities). This restructured "focused monitoring" identifies districts failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress for students with disabilities as priorities for districts slated to be reviewed for compliance with federal and state laws applicable to children with disabilities.

Section 5: Closing Ohio's Achievement Gaps: Insights from the State Superintendent's Schools of Promise

Ohio schools made important strides in achievement in the 2003-2004 school year. Overall, the state's performance index (a scale for comparing student performance from year to year) was higher in 2003-2004 than ever before. The performance index has increased almost 13 points (from 73.7 to 86.6) in five years indicating that Ohio's students, on average, are making significant academic progress.

While Ohio's students are generally scoring higher on proficiency exams, there are reasons to be concerned. There is evidence that children from low-income communities, children from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, children whose first language is not English and children who receive special education services are achieving at much lower rates than the general population. In contrast, there are schools in the state that are successfully teaching these children to achieve the state's challenging academic content standards. Student academic performance in these schools runs counter to what some might have believed possible. These schools provide important evidence to consider in planning improvement efforts and working to meet state performance and accountability goals.

What Suggests There are Gaps in Achievement Rates?

In the 2003-2004 academic year, only 37 percent of Black children demonstrated proficiency on Ohio's sixth-grade mathematics proficiency test compared to 72 percent of White children. Sixth-grade reading test scores also show a gap in the performance of these groups—40 percent of Black children passed the test compared to 70 percent of White children. Similarly, only one-half of the children with limited proficiency in English and one-fourth of students with disabilities demonstrated proficiency on the sixth-grade mathematics test. The dropout rate for Hispanic children, Black children and children from low-income communities is double and in some cases triple the rate for White children and children from more affluent communities. At every level of the education system, substantial gaps in achievement exist among diverse student groups.

Although these gaps in achievement are prevalent, they are not evident in all schools. Ohio has 102 schools that are getting very different results with the children they serve. In these 102 schools, at least 40 percent of the students meet federal low-income criteria. However, high percentages of the students in these schools have demonstrated proficiency in reading and/or mathematics. In addition, high percentages of each demographic student group in these schools achieved proficiency in reading or mathematics. For this reason, these schools have been recognized as the *State Superintendent's Schools of Promise*.

> *Every day the nation's newspapers are filled with statements—many from education leaders—about the capacity of certain groups of children to learn. This has led to a widespread myth that poor children and children of color can't learn at high levels. Yet, around the country and here in Ohio, there are schools that are getting these children to achieve at high levels. The reality is that these children can demonstrate high levels of academic achievement. These schools are proving it.*
>
> *– Kati Haycock, Education Trust*

To be named a *School of Promise*, schools must meet the following criteria:

- Forty percent or more of the students meet low-income criteria; [1]
- At least 75 percent of the students in each of the tested grade levels (third, fourth, sixth and 10th) passed the Ohio Proficiency Test in reading or mathematics and the Ohio Achievement Test in reading. [2]
- At least 75 percent of students in each racial/ethnic group and at least 75 percent of students meeting low-income criteria demonstrate proficiency on the state's reading and/or mathematics assessments. [2]
- The school meets the federal requirements for demonstrating adequate yearly progress (AYP) for all demographic groups of students, including racial/ethnic groups, English language learners, students with disabilities and students whose families meet low-income criteria;
- The school's overall proficiency rate in reading and/or mathematics for the previous school year was at least 50 percent for any grade tested;
- For secondary schools, the graduation rate was at least 73.6 percent.

So, what is different about these schools that are leading so many children to high levels of academic success? This section will identify what is known about Ohio's most recent group of 102 successful schools and share what can be learned from them. Ultimately, our hope is to inform our educational practice in ways that foster high levels of achievement for all students and in all schools – instead of in just a few.

1 This percent is based on the percentage of students who meet low-income criteria as reported in either the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) or the Education Management Information System (EMIS).

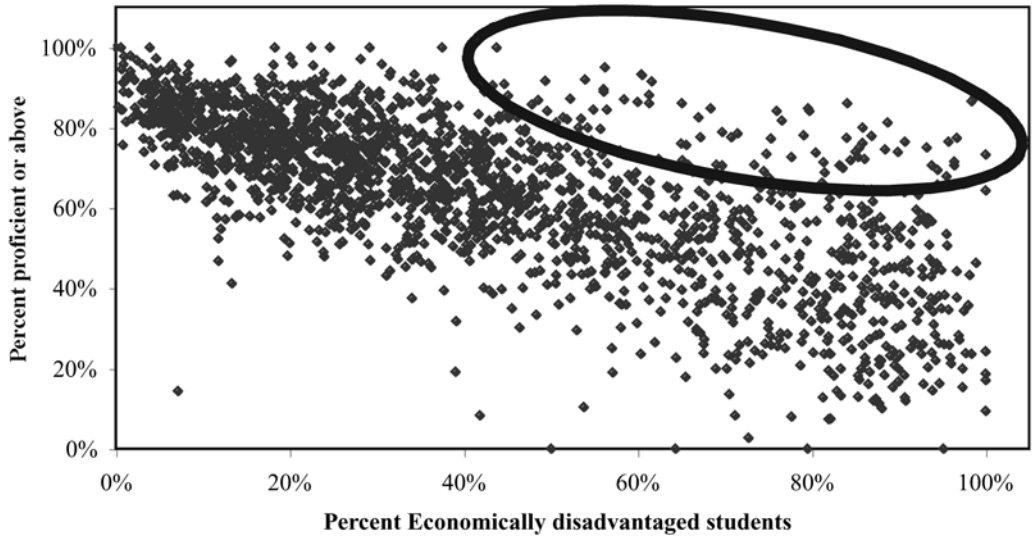
2 High schools must have at least 85 percent of students demonstrating proficiency including cumulative results on the Ninth Grade Ohio Proficiency Test by the end of 10th grade.

Is Poverty an Insurmountable Barrier?

In general, schools that serve greater proportions of students from low-income communities have lower achievement. Figure 5.1 demonstrates this negative relationship between income level and fourth-grade reading achievement. Each dot on the chart represents an elementary school in Ohio. There is a high concentration of schools on the top left quadrant of the graph, representing high-performing schools with low percentages of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches. The chart also demonstrates that as the proportion of students receiving subsidized lunches increases, the percentage of students performing proficient or above on the fourth-grade reading proficiency test decreases. There are, however, schools that defy this general pattern. The schools included in the circled portion of the chart represent schools with high percentages of students from low-income households that also have high achievement levels. Ohio's *Schools of Promise* are among this group. These schools provide evidence that household income level does not necessarily predict student performance.

Figure 5.1

Percent Proficient on the 4th Grade Proficiency Test in Reading vs. Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Students



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004

Who is Served in Ohio's Schools of Promise?

In many ways, the *Schools of Promise* are much like other schools in Ohio. These schools are geographically disbursed across most of the state and represent the diversity of Ohio's communities. They are located in urban and rural areas. Twenty-one of the 102 schools are located in Ohio's largest urban districts, (nine in the Cleveland Municipal School District) and 52 of the 102 schools are located in Appalachian communities.

While representative of the state as a whole, these schools are notable because they get students with diverse sets of needs to learn and achieve at high levels. Although the state recognition criteria specify at least 40 percent of students must meet low-income criteria, 16 schools have 75 percent or more of their students meeting these criteria. Twelve schools serve a majority (more than 50 percent) Black population. One school serves an almost all Black student population.

Table 5.2

Demographics of Ohio's 2003-04
Schools of Promise

	Minimum	Mean	Maximum
Number of Students Enrolled	38	359	1348
Percent of Students White	2.1%	79.8%	100.0%
Percent of Students Black	0.0%	15.0%	96.9%
Percent of Students Economically disadvantaged	40.0%	52.3%	100.0%

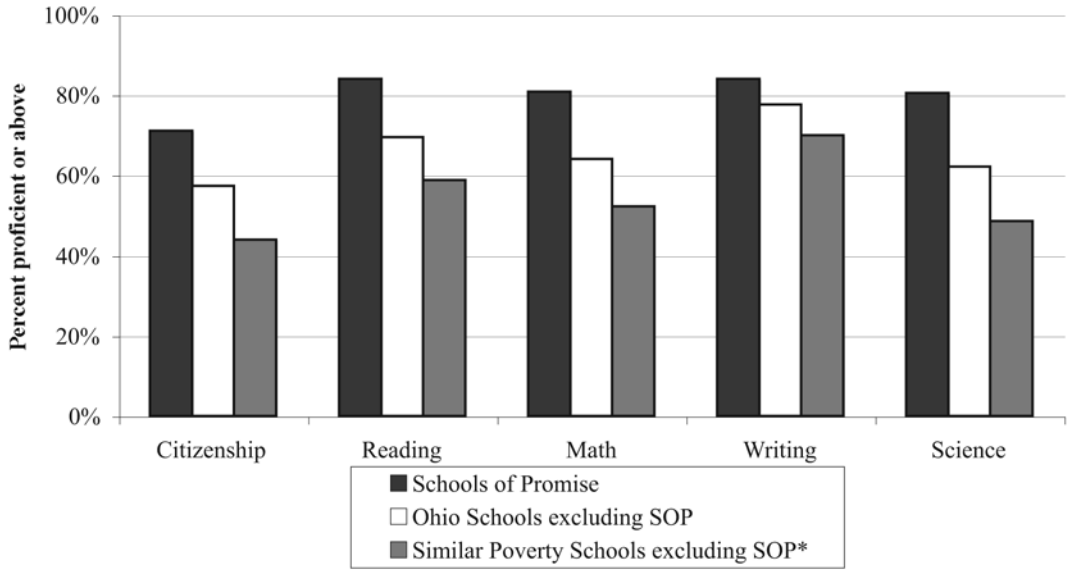
Note: Data are from EMIS 2004

How do Students Perform in Schools of Promise?

The *Schools of Promise* have been recognized for their higher than average performance on state proficiency tests in reading and/or mathematics. Figures 5.3 to 5.5 show that *Schools of Promise* have large percentages of students who score proficient or above in all subject areas on the state's proficiency tests in grades four, six and 10. On average and in most grade level subject tests, these schools outperform not only other schools serving students from low-income communities, but all other Ohio schools.

Figure 5.3

Grade 4 Proficiency Comparison

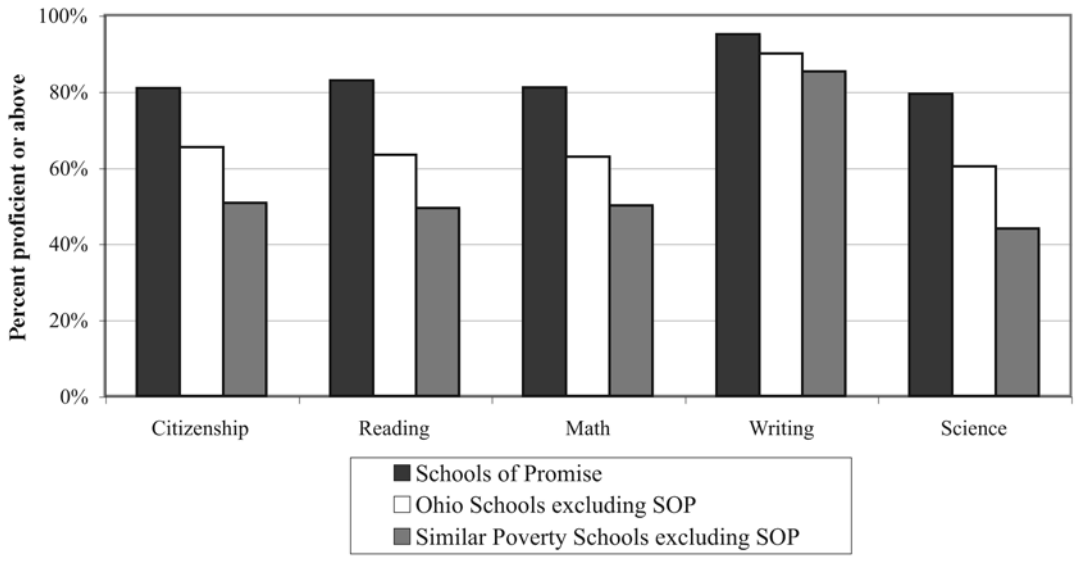


Note: Data are from EMIS 2004

* Similar poverty schools are schools where at least 40% of the students meet free/reduced lunch criteria, however, this subset does not include the 102 *Schools of Promise*.

Figure 5.4

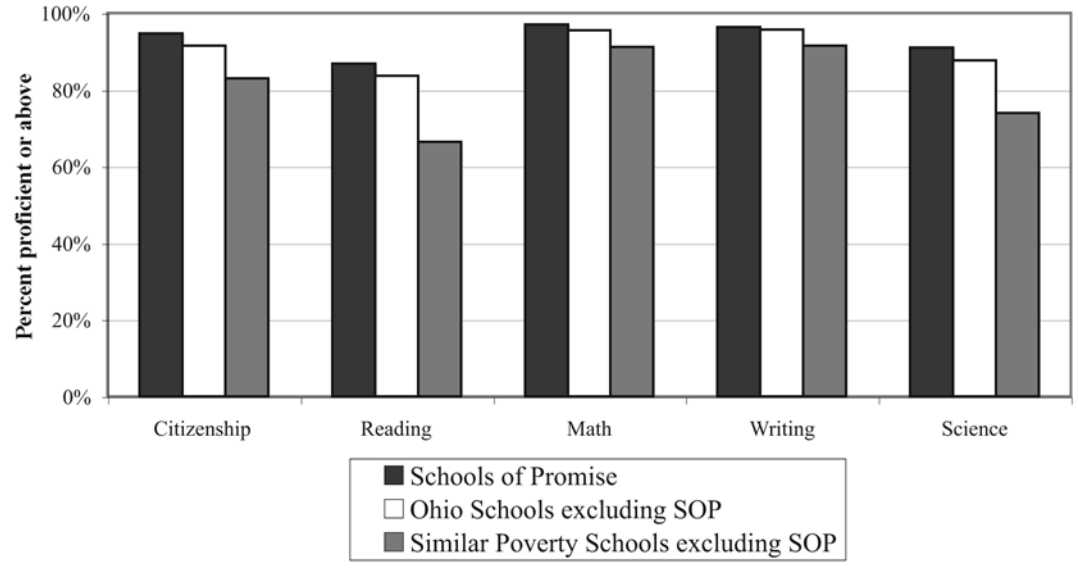
Grade 6 Proficiency Comparison



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004

Figure 5.5

Grade 10 Proficiency Comparison



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004

In addition, the *Schools of Promise* have high levels of achievement for the various demographic groups they serve. At least 75 percent of the students in each demographic group demonstrated proficiency in either reading or mathematics. Further, in 13 of the schools, at least 75 percent of students with disabilities demonstrated proficiency in reading or mathematics. In contrast, the statewide percentage proficiency rate for fourth-grade students with disabilities was 36.6 percent in reading and 37.7 percent in mathematics.

These schools are generating other strong indicators of success beyond statewide test results. Compared to other schools serving the same populations of children, *Schools of Promise* also have higher student attendance and graduation rates and lower out-of-school suspension rates (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6

Mean Comparisons, 2004

	Schools of Promise	Similar Poverty Schools excluding SOP	Ohio Schools excluding SOP
Attendance Rate	95.2%	94.4%	94.6%
Black	96.1%	94.4%	94.1%
White	95.1%	94.1%	94.5%
Graduation Rate	89.5%	68.3%	86.0%
Black	89.7%	63.3%	73.0%
White	88.0%	67.5%	87.2%
Out-of-School Suspensions (per 100 students)	11.6	22.7	14.0

Note: Data are from EMIS 2004

Schools of Promise have a higher graduation rate than the state as a whole (89.5 vs. 84.3 percent). In *Schools of Promise*, the graduation rate for Black students is higher than the state graduation rate for Black students (89.7 vs. 62.9 percent). *Schools of Promise* also have a higher graduation rate for Black students than other high-poverty schools (89.7 vs. 63.3 percent).

In addition, *Schools of Promise* have out-of-school suspension rates roughly one-half that of schools serving similar populations of low-income students.

Why Do Schools of Promise Get Different Results?

Is It a Matter of Money?

The average "non-School of Promise" in Ohio spends $9,102 per child. Eighteen of the *Schools of Promise* spend more per student; 84 schools spend less per student. The average *School of Promise* spends $7,759. However, one *School of Promise* spends as little as $3,093 while another spent $15,070 per student. More research needs to be done to examine the types of expenditures that may be contributing most to the successes of *Schools of Promise*.

Table 5.7

Mean Comparisons, 2004

	Schools of Promise	High Poverty Schools excluding SOP	Ohio Schools excluding SOP
Total Per Pupil Expenditures	$7,759.04	**$10,565.77**	**$9,101.93**
Teacher Experience	14.0	**13.0**	14.3

Note: Data are from EMIS 2004

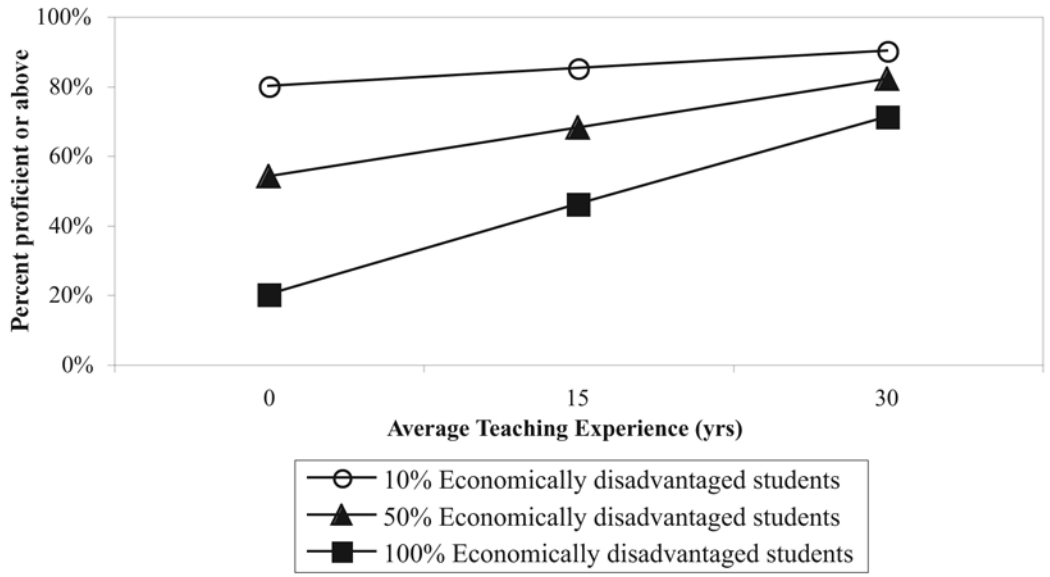
Is It the Teachers?

In general, children who come from low-income communities are more likely to be taught by teachers with less experience than children living in more affluent communities. However, *Schools of Promise* employ teachers who have one more year of experience (14 years) on average than teachers in other schools serving large numbers of low-income students (13 years). Among the 102 *Schools of Promise*, average teacher experience ranges from a minimum of four years to a maximum of 28 years.

Haycock (2003) suggests that one of the biggest predictors of student achievement is the preparation and experience of teachers. Interestingly, Figure 5.8 shows that the impact of experienced teachers on reading proficiency becomes greater as the concentration of students from low-income households increases. While experienced teachers have a positive effect on reading achievement in general, the experience level of teachers is even more important in schools that serve large low-income populations.

Figure 5.8

Teaching Experience and 4th Grade Reading Proficiency Rate at Different Levels of Poverty



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004

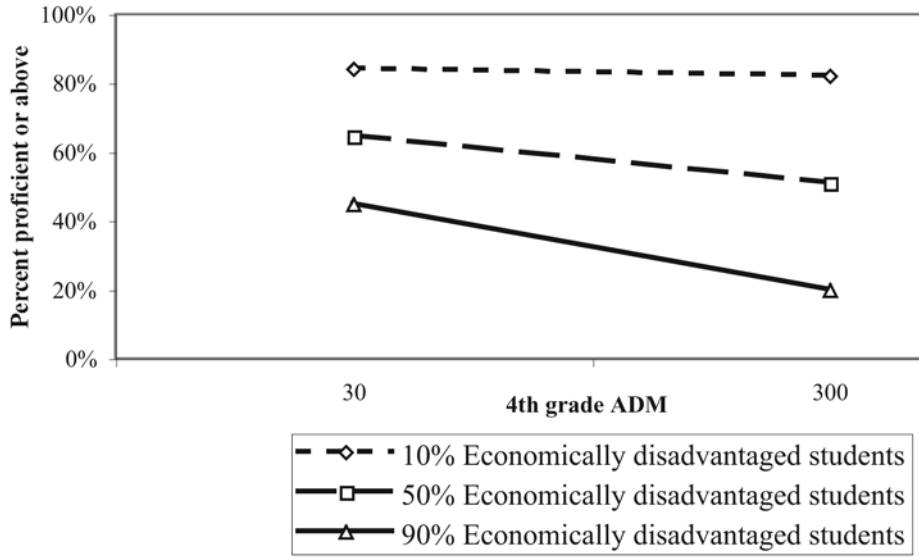
Is It School Size?

The 102 *Schools of Promise* include elementary, middle and high schools with enrollment ranging from a minimum of 38 to a maximum of 1,348 students. The average size is about 350 students. *Schools of Promise* are generally smaller than other Ohio schools. Research suggests that smaller school size can influence the opportunities that faculty and staff members have to tailor instruction to meet the needs of individual students and generally helps to foster a sense of community where students are well-known by their teachers (Meier 1996).

Overall school size, rather than pupil-teacher ratio, appears to be a more important factor for proficiency. The advantages of a small school are especially profound in lower-income buildings, as suggested by Figure 5.9. This figure explores the relationship between school size, income level of students served by the school and fourth-grade reading achievement. It shows that as school size decreases, proficiency rates increase. Schools with the largest percentages of students meeting low-income criteria experience the greatest increase in achievement when school size is reduced.

Figure 5.9

School Size, Economic Disadvantagement, and 4th Grade Proficiency Rate



Note: Data are from EMIS 2004

What Seems to Matter Most?

Since the inception of the *Schools of Promise* program in 2002, a number of insights have emerged that provide a better understanding of the conditions that produce successful schools. A team of researchers visited schools, observed classrooms and conducted interviews with students, teachers, parents, principals and district leaders. In some cases, school leaders shared curriculum, model lesson plans, sample assessments and other planning or instructional documents with members of the school visit team. The conditions for teaching and learning evidenced in these schools are summarized in the following five themes: delivering rigorous standards-based instruction; providing strong leadership around improved instruction; designing instruction to ensure student success; engaging parents and the community to support students; and creating a school culture where individuals are valued.

1. Schools of Promise deliver rigorous instruction aligned to the state academic content standards.

In *Schools of Promise*, students are expected to learn challenging content and are regularly asked to use higher-order thinking skills. Teachers often cite the specific state content standard addressed by a lesson and tell their students what they are expected to know and be able to do. In almost every case, teachers participate in group efforts to align curriculum to the state's academic content standards. For example, teachers and administrators at Buckeye SouthWest Middle School, an Appalachian community in eastern Ohio, participate in professional development opportunities at both the district and state levels around the academic content standards and curriculum alignment. Working closely with educators at the Jefferson County Educational Service Center for the past five years, teachers have implemented new strategies from their professional development training, including analyzing data to determine each student's areas of strength and need. Instruction has been strengthened by ensuring that students are being taught the rigorous concepts and skills that were not mastered in prior years. Moreover, these practices are occurring across the district and have resulted in alignment between the elementary, middle and high schools. Buckeye South Elementary, a school in this district, was recently recognized for high achievement in third- and fourth-grade reading scores.

2. Schools of Promise have leaders who promote the continuous improvement of instruction.

The principal, superintendent and district leaders of these schools make sure that the school is strategically focused on improving teaching and learning. For instance, the principal at Tiffin Elementary School in the Chillicothe City School District empowers faculty and staff to become instructional leaders and to use data to drive instruction by creating their own short-term assessments based on state standards. Two veteran fourth-grade teachers with different teaching styles serve as instructional leaders for other teachers in the building. Diverse teaching styles are among the strengths of this school. The district provides high-quality, job-embedded professional development, such as a part-time coach who works with staff in identifying effective strategies to increase the reading performance of at-risk students. The principal gives staff members the time needed to plan, work and learn from one another. Leaders, such as those in Chillicothe, create job cultures where everyone is focused on high-quality teaching and learning by supporting one another as they work toward improved student achievement.

3. These schools design instruction to ensure every student's success.

Cleveland Municipal School District has nine *Schools of Promise*, which demonstrate the district's ability to serve diverse student populations. For example, Whitney M. Young Middle School serves students who are gifted as well as those who are multi-handicapped and autistic. Louisa May Alcott Elementary School serves a student population where 27 percent are students with disabilities, 33 percent are Black, 9 percent are Hispanic, and almost all of the students meet low-income criteria. Douglas MacArthur Year Round Elementary School serves a majority of Black students with about five percent White and some Hispanic and Asian children. Successful teachers in these Cleveland schools use multiple ways to teach students with diverse abilities, whether it's one-on-one instruction, cooperative learning among a group of students, team teaching across a grade level, or after-school and summer programs. In these schools, reading and mathematics get the most attention and time throughout the school day. Sometimes double periods of these core subjects are offered to ensure students develop essential skills. Teachers also integrate mathematics and reading into other subject areas such as science, social studies and the arts.

4. These schools engage parents and the community to support student success.

In many ways, these schools are an extension of the community with blurred boundaries between home, school and the community. At MacDonald Elementary School in northeastern Ohio, the motto is "Caring for the children we share." Parents, grandparents and other family members contribute to children's educational success by becoming involved in after-school programs such as a homework club, math tutoring, phonics and proficiency prep sessions. There is constant communication between parents and teachers through weekly newsletters, notes and postcards. In schools like MacDonald in Wellsville Local School District, there is a strong sense of community and ownership, a feeling that the school is theirs. Many of the district's teachers once attended these schools and have spent their lifetimes giving back to the educational system.

5. These schools create a culture where each individual feels valued.

From the bus driver to the cafeteria worker, from the advanced placement student to the student with multiple special needs, everyone feels valued in these schools. School leaders create a community where teachers feel supported and students believe in themselves. At Struthers High School in Struthers City School District, a student survey conducted each spring informs administrators and teachers how students perceive them, their classrooms, school safety and the overall school atmosphere. The motto at Struthers is "Let them know you care!" When asked what they like about the school, students say they like their teachers. They feel that their teachers push them to reach high expectations and will take extra time to help them when they do not understand the material. In these schools, students know that the adults around them care and respect them, know them personally and are committed to their success.

Resources

Education Trust (http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/)

Education Week Achievement Gap Web page (http://www.edweek.org/context/topics/issuespage.cfm?id=61)

Haycock, Kati (2003), presentation to the Schools of Promise Annual Statewide Conference, Columbus, Ohio.

Meier, Deborah W. (July 1995). Small Schools, Big Results: An acclaimed former New York City principal says school size has a lot with students' success. The American School Board Journal, 182 (7) 37-40.

NCREL's Achievement Gap Resource webpage (http://www.ncrel.org/gap/index.html)

State Superintendent's Schools of Promise Web page
(http://www.ode.state.oh.us/achievement_gaps/Schools_of_Promise/)

U.S. Department of Education's Achievement Gap Resource webpage
(http://www.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/achieve/edpicks.jhtml?src=qc)

Conclusion

We hope that the information and data presented in this *Condition of Education in Ohio 2004* report contributes to and promotes conversations about the policies, programs and practices that influence public education, both at the state level and within individual school districts across Ohio.

This annual report provides a comprehensive picture of who we are serving in our public education system, and most importantly, how well we are serving them. Certainly, we are beginning to experience the positive impact of standards-based reform in Ohio. Achievement is improving statewide, and at the same time, we are accounting for the performance of a greater proportion of students. While all groups of students are experiencing this improvement, substantial gaps remain. The *Condition of Education in Ohio 2004* illuminates the need to improve teaching and learning at all educational levels throughout the system. In addition, it explores funding opportunities, intervention strategies and educator training programs available statewide that can be accessed by our local school districts.

The *Condition of Education in Ohio 2004* can help the public, legislators and the business community understand how much progress Ohio has made as a state – along with the challenges that lie ahead. We hope that this report serves as a model to conduct the kind of deeper trend analyses within individual school districts that provide concrete data about how all students and student groups are performing. This analysis begins the process of understanding the relationship between resources and productivity. Increased investment in Ohio public schools has been accompanied by increased achievement. At a time when school districts face increasingly tough financial choices, greater productivity will continue to be necessary for further improvement. The report allows educators, boards of education, public officials and community leaders to focus on policies and practices that can make a difference in student performance in their schools.

As educators, policy-makers and researchers continue to engage in critical dialogue about the achievement of all students, we hope this annual report will help inform the conversation about educational policies and practices in Ohio for years to come.

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Glossary of Definitions

Below are definitions of some terms and acronyms that are commonly used by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). After each definition is the appropriate link to an ODE or external Web site where more information can be found about the definition and related subjects, if one exists. A general list of acronyms can be found at: http://www.ode.state.oh.us/employee/acronyms.asp.

A

Achievement Tests: Like the diagnostic assessments, achievement assessments also must measure student mastery of academic content and related skills but are designed to serve additional purposes. At the student level, certain achievement assessments (e.g., Ohio Graduation Tests) figure into the criteria for obtaining a diploma. State law also mandates that school districts provide intervention services for students who fail to obtain designated achievement levels.

On a broader level, achievement assessment results will inform decisions for educational programming at the school, district and state levels. To make the results more useful, ODE must disaggregate statistically sound assessment results according to student age, race and ethnicity, gender, length of enrollment in a particular district or school, economic background and any other category ODE deems appropriate.

In addition to their value for improving educational programming at the school, district and state levels, the achievement assessment results will be used for state and federal accountability purposes. As part of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations, ODE will report to the federal government data from achievement assessments in reading and mathematics and, eventually, science. At the state level, results of all achievement assessments factor into the performance indicators used for the school and district report cards.

Because they are used for accountability purposes, it is critical that these assessments yield valid and reliable results for students across the state. Special measures are taken to ensure that the assessments and their administrations yield such results. For example, each test must be scored in the same way and test results must be carefully reviewed for accuracy. Specially trained personnel score all achievement tests to ensure this accuracy and consistency. http://www.ode.state.oh.us/proficiency/Diagnostic_Achievement/default.asp

Academic Content Standards: The academic content standards describe what a student should know and be able to do at each grade level. The academic content standards are composed of standards, benchmarks and grade-level indicators. Ohio's statewide assessments are based on the academic content standards. http://www.ode.state.oh.us/academic_content_standards/

ADM (Average Daily Membership): This is the average number of students who meet Full Academic Year criteria who are enrolled in a school or district.

$$\text{Average Daily Membership} = \frac{\left[\begin{array}{c}\text{Total Attendance Days} \\ + \\ \text{Total Authorized Absence} \\ + \\ \text{Total Unauthorized Absence Days}\end{array}\right]}{\text{Days in Session}}$$

AP (Advanced Placement): A program that allows high school students to participate in college-level academic coursework and gives them the opportunity to show that they have mastered the advanced material by taking a national AP Exam administered by the College Board.
http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html

AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress): The federal mandate that holds schools accountable for the performance of subgroups, as well as all students. The goals for schools, districts, and the state are to meet or exceed the annual objective or to make progress over the previous year. The final goal is to have 100 percent of all students at or above proficient in reading and mathematics by 2013-14. More information about yearly goals and answers to frequently asked questions are available at: http://www.ode.state.oh.us/reportcard/definitions/keyterms.asp.

B

Board of Regents: The Ohio Board of Regents leads, advocates and coordinates the process of ongoing development of higher education to maximize accessible, high-quality learning opportunities in a fiscally responsible manner that results in individual successes and improved intellectual, social and economic lives for all Ohioans.
http://www.regents.state.oh.us/

C

CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers): The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses its views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress and the public.

Community School: A community school is a nontuition public school attended and staffed by those who choose to go there, operated by a negotiation between the governing authority of the school and a sponsor. Community schools are free of most local and state education regulations based on three education themes: choice, flexibility and accountability. More information is available on the community school Web page: http://www.ode.state.oh.us/community_schools/

Core Courses: Core course are defined by No Child Left Behind as English language arts, reading, mathematics, science, art, foreign language, government and civics, economics, geography and history.

CRT (Criterion Referenced Test): An assessment in which a student's performance is compared to a specific learning objective or achievement standard (e.g., academic content standards) and not the performance of other students. Criterion-referenced assessments measure how well students are achieving specific goals or standards rather than measuring how well their performance compares to a norm group of students nationally or locally (as with norm-referenced assessments). In criterion-referenced assessments, it is possible that all of the students tested will reach a particular goal or achievement standard.
http://www.ode.state.oh.us/proficiency/documents_forms/process.asp

D

Digital School: A digital school is a specialized form of a community school. Typically, a digital school is operated by a traditional public school and enables students to learn at their own pace in a variety of learning environments. Digital schools also are referred to as virtual schools, e-schools, and distance learning schools.

District Rating: The Local Report Card rates districts and schools based on whichever is higher – the percentage of report card indicators met or the performance index score – and whether the AYP goals were met for the year. The ratings are Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch or Academic Emergency.

E

Economically Disadvantaged Students: The following students should be reported as economically disadvantaged:
1. Students who are known to be eligible to receive the free or reduced-price lunch (a program through the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Programs). To be eligible for free lunch, a student's family income must be at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level. To be eligible for reduced-price lunch, a student's family income must be at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level.
2. Students who are known to be recipients of or whose guardians are known to be recipients of public assistance. A source for determining if a student's family is receiving public assistance is the Education Monetary Assistance Distribution (EMAD) system from ODJFS.
http://www.ode.state.oh.us/emis/pdf/FY2004_CHAPTER_2_REV_VERSION_2004_04_21.pdf

EMAD (Education Monetary Assistance Distribution): EMAD is an online data system that is used to provide counts of students in poverty by resident district and within district by community school for determining state Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid (DPIA) funding.

EMIS (Education Management Information System): ODE's data information system through which schools, districts and ODE transmit and exchange records and calculations.
http://www.ode.state.oh.us/EMIS/

ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act): The principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school, now included in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

G

(GRF) General Revenue Funds: The term for state funds.

H

Highly Qualified Teacher: The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that all core courses be taught by highly qualified teachers by the 2005-06 school year. http://www.ode.state.oh.us/teaching-profession/aor.asp.

I

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): Amounts to an intervention strategy, used mostly, but not exclusively, for special needs children. It represents a guideline of strategies and goals to be followed for the school year. A committee that includes teachers, resource counselors and the child's parent of guardian develops the plan. The IEP represents the school's best assessment of a child's difficulties and what approaches hold the most promise. It is a written, legal contract that says what services the school will provide.

L

LRC (Local Report Card): Indicators based on students' performances on achievement tests, rates of improvement on those tests and students' attendance and graduation rates.
http://www.ode.state.oh.us/reportcard/

LEP (Limited English Proficient): Used as a shorthand for students with limited English proficiency, otherwise known as English language learners. Ohio follows the same federal government definition of limited English proficient as described in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The term "limited English proficient" means an individual:

- Who is ages three through 21; and
- Who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school; and
- Who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; or
- Who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of outlying areas; and
- Who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
- Who is migratory or whose native language is a language other than English, and
- Who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- Whose difficulties speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual the ability to meet the state's proficient level of achievement on state assessments, the ability to achieve successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or the opportunity to participate fully in society.

http://www.ode.state.oh.us/emis/pdf/FY2004_CHAPTER_2_REV_VERSION_2004_04_21.pdf

N

NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress): NAEP is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas.
http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/

NCLB (No Child Left Behind): The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is an education reform designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America's schools. With passage of No Child Left Behind, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) — the principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school. In amending ESEA, the new law represents a sweeping overhaul of federal efforts to support elementary and secondary education in the United States. It is built on four pillars: accountability for results; emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research; expanded parental options; and expanded local control and flexibility.

NRT (Norm-Referenced Test): An instrument developed and used to estimate how the individuals being assessed compare to other individuals in terms of performance on the test. Individual performance is judged in comparison to other individuals tested, rather than against a set of criteria, as with criterion-referenced tests. http://www.ode.state.oh.us/proficiency/documents_forms/process.asp

O

OGT (Ohio Graduation Test): Part of Ohio's educational reform is to establish an aligned system of standards, tests and accountability for Ohio's schools. Beginning in March 2005 with the Class of 2007, students must pass the Ohio Graduation Test in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies to earn an Ohio high school diploma. The purpose of the Ohio Graduation Test is to ensure that students receiving high school diplomas demonstrate high levels of academic achievement; measure the level of writing, reading, mathematics, science and social studies skills expected of students by the end of 10th grade; and meet federal requirements for high school testing.

OMAP (Ohio Mathematics Academy Program): A high-quality professional development program that targets high-need districts to improve teaching and learning in the area of mathematics.

OSCI (Ohio Science Institute): A high-quality professional development program that targets high-need districts to improve teaching and learning in the area of science.

P

Performance Index Score: A weighted average of a school's or district's assessment results across all tested grades and all subjects based on the performance levels of untested, below basic, basic, proficient, accelerated and advanced. The percentage of students at each performance level is multiplied by 1.2 (advanced), 1.1 (accelerated), 1.0 (proficient), 0.6 (basic), 0.3 (below basic), or 0 (untested) and the products are summed. The score is on a scale of 0 to 120 points with 100 being the goal.

S

Scaled Score: Each test form contains different test questions. Although efforts are made to construct test forms that are approximately equal in difficulty, the first and foremost priority is to ensure content validity (i.e., to measure the academic content standards approved by the State Board of Education). As a result, it is possible that the same raw score, or number of questions correct, on two different forms will represent different levels of performance, depending on the difficulty of the questions used on each form. For instance, a performance level set at a raw score of 28 on one form might represent the same performance level as a raw score of 27 or 29 on a subsequent form. Since raw scores are not comparable from one form of the test to another and provide very limited information for interpretation of current performance, a system was developed to convert raw scores to scaled scores for the appropriate Ohio tests. Scaled scores represent approximately equal units on a continuous scale. Since test forms also are equated to the same scale, scaled scores offer a distinct advantage for making comparisons between different students taking different forms of the test within a subject area. For example, for a given subject, one year's test can be compared to another year's test.

School Improvement Status: A school or district enters improvement status after missing AYP for two consecutive years. Improvement status means students have the option of school choice. If a school remains in improvement status for three consecutive years, in addition to school choice, the students have the option to receive supplemental service, such as tutoring. Missing AYP for four or more years means the school or district is in corrective action and more intensive consequences accrue; students still have the option for school choice and supplemental services.

- School Choice Information (Year 1 or more of School Improvement Status). More information is available at http://www.ode.state.oh.us/esea/superintendent/docs/Public_School_Choice.asp.
- Supplemental Services Information (Year 2 or more of School Improvement Status). More information is available at http://www.ode.state.oh.us/esea/superintendent/Supplemental_Education_Service_Providers_Home.asp.
- Corrective Action (Year 3 or more of School Improvement Status). More information is available at http://www.ode.state.oh.us/esea/superintendent/web_docs/Corrective_Actions.asp

School Rating: The 2003-04 Local Report Card is the first to rate schools (in addition to districts) based on whichever is higher – the percentage of report card indicators met or the performance index score – and whether AYP goals were met for the year. The ratings are Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch or Academic Emergency.

SERRC (Special Education Regional Resource Center): Under Ohio's State Plan submitted in accordance with P.L. 94-142, part of the discretionary portion of Title VI-B is used to fund the Special Education Regional Resource Center (SERRC) network system. This statewide mechanism was designed to develop and implement services and priorities in keeping with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), formerly called the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA). The SERRCs fulfill a critical role in providing timely and specialized assistance to parents and school personnel by:

1. Assisting school district personnel in providing appropriate services to children with disabilities, through technical assistance and cooperative planning;
2. Providing regular and special education teachers, support personnel, administrators and parents with resources designed to improve the quality of instruction for children with disabilities through the delivery of instructional materials and methodologies designed to meet the individual needs of children with special needs; and
3. Providing staff development to local school district personnel and parents, on an individual and team basis, to improve the quality of instruction for children with disabilities.

Similar Districts: School districts that are similar, based on comparing district size, poverty levels, socioeconomic status (family income, education levels, professions) and factors related to urban or rural location and overall property wealth. More information about similar districts can be found at http://webapp2.ode.state.oh.us/similar_districts/

State Standard: The State Board of Education minimum requirement is that 75 percent of students in fourth, sixth and ninth grades are at or above the proficiency level on statewide assessments. The standard increases to 85 percent of students at the proficient level for the results on the ninth-grade test by the end of 10th grade. The nontest standards are 90 percent for graduation rate and 93 percent for attendance rate.

Student Groups: Students are grouped by a demographic or other characteristic, such as race/ethnicity, gender, economic status, language background or disability. Examining the performance of student groups is a requirement in both state and federal law.

T

TIMSS (Third International Mathematics and Science Study): TIMSS, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, is designed to help countries all over the world improve student learning in mathematics and science. It collects educational achievement data at the fourth and eighth grades to provide information about trends in performance over time together with extensive background information to address concerns about the quantity, quality and content of instruction. The last TIMSS assessment was conducted in 2003.
http://isc.bc.edu/timss2003.html

Title I: Title I is designed to support state and local school reform efforts tied to challenging state academic standards to reinforce and amplify efforts to improve teaching and learning for students furthest from meeting state standards. Individual public schools with poverty rates above 40 percent may use Title I funds, along with other federal, state and local funds, to operate school-wide programs to upgrade the instructional programs within the schools. Schools with poverty rates below 40 percent, or those choosing not to operate a school-wide program, offer "targeted assistance programs" in which schools identify students who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state's challenging performance standards, then design, in consultation with parents and district staff members, an instructional program to meet the needs of those students. Both school-wide and targeted assistance programs must be based on effective means of improving student achievement and include strategies to support parental involvement.


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